



## VISION OF INDIA

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*Selections from the works of*

Rabindranath Tagore

Swami Vivekananda

Mahatma Gandhi

Sri Aurobindo

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

Jawaharlal Nehru



INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS



## **VISION OF INDIA**

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## Foreword

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Every great civilization rests on the foundation of a cultural tradition rooted in its history. Whenever a great nation is faced with a crisis that threatens to negate its fundamental values, it seeks to find its moorings in its own timeless philosophical tradition. Colonization of India by the British came as a threat not only to the 5000 years old Indian civilization, but also to the greatest cultural amalgam of Asian civilizations.

The movement of Indian Independence brought to the fore its finest philosophical minds. They constituted what can easily be described as modern *Sapt-Rishis*. When one looks back at the history of Indian writing over the past century or so, it is difficult to find minds greater than Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Jawaharlal Nehru, not only in India, but indeed in the world.

This book is a selection of works, of seven of the greatest minds of the Indian Independence Movement. These selections represent the core values from which contours of modern India emanated. Needless to say, this volume is one of the most significant works published by ICCR. ICCR has now decided to bring out this volume, both in a CD-ROM and also as a popular paperback edition.

It gives me great pleasure to invite those interested in understanding the philosophical past of the timeless Indian civilization to study and benefit from this volume.

**Najma Heptulla**  
*President, ICCR*



## Acknowledgements

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Every great country, its culture and civilization has its moorings in certain fundamental values that define its society. India's Independence Movement represented a churning process where the leaders engaged in serious introspection on the very concept of "*Indianness*". This process of introspection led each of them to enunciate their own vision of India.

In 1981, a team of prominent Indian philosophers and scholars, led by Dr. Karan Singh, the then Vice-President of Indian Council for Cultural Relations, went through the entire body of works of eminent personalities that shaped and guided the movement for country's Independence, namely, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Jawaharlal Nehru; and selected several representative papers encapsulating the core values which defined their vision of India.

This book has been one of the most popular publications of ICCR over the years. It is now being brought out in a paperback edition to make it available to students of Indian philosophy.

**Rakesh Kumar**  
*Director General*  
Indian Council for Cultural Relations



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# Introduction

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The heart of any great cultural and intellectual tradition is best reflected in the writings of its finest minds. In this collection we present seven outstanding Indians who in the twentieth century played a crucial role in the regeneration and reintegration of modern Indian culture. In this *Vision of India* we present a broad spectrum of thinkers, all of whom have made a substantial contribution to Indian and world literature. This is now being brought out in a paperback edition so as to make it available to a wider audience, particularly to students.

**Rabindranath Tagore** (1861 - 1941) was the great poet-philosopher of modern India, whose Nobel Prize for Literature only confirmed the eminent place that he occupied in world literature. His luminous and deeply moving poems, translated by himself from the original Bengali, are part of the heritage of the twentieth century. His prose also was elegant and deeply thought-provoking.

**Swami Vivekananda** (1863 - 1902) was the first of a series of outstanding religious teachers and social reformers, who carried the true message of Hindu philosophy not only to all corners of India but to the Western World. His advent at the Parliament of the Worlds' Religions in Chicago in 1893 marked the beginning of a powerful new movement that continues down to the present day. Though a fervent patriot, his message of Vedanta was addressed to the whole of humanity, and his vision was of a regenerated India which could serve as a spiritual beacon light to mankind.

**Mahatma Gandhi** (1869 - 1948), of course, is revered as the Father of the Nation, but it would be a mistake to look upon his contribution as being confined only to the political field. He was indeed a unique political leader, but he was much more than that, a social reformer and practical idealist who perfected a whole new technique of political, economic and social activities based on the twin ideals of truth and non - violence. One of the most remarkable figures of the last millennium, Mahatma Gandhi remains a powerful moral and spiritual influence in this nuclear age.

**Sri Aurobindo** (1872 - 1950) was one of the most remarkable figures in the national movement at the turn of the twentieth century when it first began to



he radicalised and moved out of conference halls into the streets and villages of India. Subsequently, for 40 years from 1910 to 1950, Sri Aurobindo lived in Pondicherry and developed a comprehensive system of thought unique in its depth and profundity. The basic concept in his philosophy is that of spiritual evolution, and his works constitute some of the most original philosophical thinking of modern times.

**Maulana Abul Kalam Azad** (1888 -1958) was a great scholar in Arabic and Persian, and among the outstanding Urdu writers of the century. He played a significant role in India's freedom movement, and was independent India's first Education Minister and also the first President of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. With his deep knowledge of Islam he was able to take a broad, integral view of Indian and world culture.

**Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan** (1888 -1975) was the distinguished philosopher-statesman of modern India. A brilliant academician, whose scholarship won him world renown, Dr Radhakrishnan filled a number of important public positions and was finally elevated to the highest office in India, that of President of India. A brilliant expositor of the Hindu cultural tradition, Dr Radhakrishnan's works are contemporary classics in their scholarship and the clarity of their expression.

**Jawaharlal Nehru** (1889 -1964) was the passionate leader of our freedom struggle. A man of many parts - humanist, socialist, democrat, anti-colonialist, author, historian - his role in the liberation of India had a tremendous impact which was felt throughout Asia and Africa, and his contribution towards the concept of creative non - alignment probably saved the world from a major catastrophe in the early fifties. For 17 years as first Prime Minister of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru worked till his last day in the service of the nation, and left an indelible imprint on almost all aspects of our national life.

The thinkers represented here wrote prolifically during their lifetime, almost exclusively in English, although Mahatma Gandhi did also write in Hindi and Gujarati. Maulana Azad wrote in Urdu, and his is the only translated text in this collection. The rest are in the original words of the authors, and we present this small selection of their writings in the hope that it will stimulate readers to turn to their basic works and explore with them in greater depth the marvels and mysteries of the Indian cultural tradition. This indeed is the task for which the Indian Council for Cultural Relations has been created.

**Dr Karan Singh, M.P.**  
*Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University*

*Republic Day*  
*26 January 2005*

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

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## *THE RELIGION OF AN ARTIST*

*I* WAS BORN in 1861: That is not an important date of history, but it belongs to a great epoch in Bengal, when the currents of three movements had met in the life of our country. One of these, the religious, was introduced by a very great-hearted man of gigantic intelligence, Raja Rammohan Roy. It was revolutionary, for he tried to reopen the channel of spiritual life which had been obstructed for many years by the sands and debris of creeds that were formal and materialistic, fixed in external practices lacking spiritual significance. People who cling to an ancient past have their pride in the antiquity of their accumulations, in the sublimity of time-honoured walls around them. They grow nervous and angry when some great spirit, some lover of truth, breaks open their enclosure and floods it with the sunshine of thought and the breath of life. Ideas cause movement and all forward movements they consider to be a menace to their warehouse security.

This was happening about the time I was born. I am proud to say that my father was one of the great leaders of that movement, a movement for whose sake he suffered ostracism and braved social indignities. I was born in this atmosphere of the advent of new ideals, which at the same time were old, older than all the things of which that age was proud.

There was a second movement equally important. Bankimchandra Chatterjee, who, though much older than myself, was my contemporary and lived long enough for me to see him, was the first pioneer in the literary revolution which happened in Bengal about that time. Before his arrival our literature had been oppressed by a rhetoric that choked its life and loaded it with ornaments that became its fetters. Bankimchandra was brave enough to go against the orthodoxy which believed in the security of tombstones and in the finality which can only belong to the lifeless. He lifted the dead weight of ponderous forms from our language and with a touch of his magic wand aroused our literature from her age-long sleep. A great promise and a vision of beauty she revealed to us when she awoke in the fullness of her strength and grace.

There was yet another movement started about this time called the National. It was not fully political, but it began to give voice to the mind of our people trying to assert their own personality. It was a voice of impatience at the humiliation constantly heaped upon us by people who were not oriental, and who had, especially at that time, the habit of sharply dividing the human world into the good and the bad, according to the hemispheres to which they belonged.

This contemptuous spirit of separatedness was perpetually hurting us and causing great damage to our own world of culture. It generated in our young men a distrust of all things that had come to them as an inheritance from their past. The old Indian pictures and other works of art were laughed at by our students in imitation of the laughter of their European schoolmasters of that age of philistinism.

Though later on our teachers themselves had changed their mind, their disciples had hardly yet fully regained confidence in the merit of our art. They have had a long period of encouragement in developing an appetite for third-rate copies of French pictures, for gaudy oleographs abjectly cheap, for the pictures that are products of mechanical accuracy of a stereotyped standard, and they still considered it to be a symptom of superior culture to be able disdainfully to refuse oriental works of creation.

The modern young men of that period nodded their heads and said that true originality lay not in the discovery of the rhythm of the essential in the heart of reality but in the full lips, tinted cheeks and bare breasts of imported pictures. The same spirit of rejection, born of utter ignorance, was cultivated in other departments of our culture. It was the result of the hypnotism exercised upon the minds of the younger generation by people who were loud of voice and strong of arm. The national movement was started to proclaim that we must not be indiscriminate in our rejection of the past. This was not a reactionary movement but a revolutionary one, because it set out with a great courage to deny and to oppose all pride in mere borrowings.

These three movements were on foot and in all three the members of my own family took active part. We were ostracized because of our heterodox opinions about religion and, therefore, we enjoyed the freedom of the outcast. We had to build our own world with our own thoughts and energy of mind.

I was born and brought up in an atmosphere of the confluence of three movements, all of which were revolutionary. My family had to live its own life, which led me from my young days to seek guidance for my own self-expression in my own inner standard of judgement. The medium of expression doubtless was my mother tongue. But the

language which belonged to the people had to be modulated according to the urge which I as an individual had.

No poet should borrow his medium ready-made from some shop of orthodox respectability. He should not only have his own seeds but prepare his own soil. Each poet has his own distinct medium of language—not because the whole language is of his own make, but because his individual use of it, having life's magic touch, transforms it into a special vehicle of his own creation.

The races of man have poetry in their heart and it is necessary for them to give, as far as is possible, a perfect expression to their sentiments. For this they must have a medium, moving and pliant, which can freshly become their very own, age after age. All great languages have undergone and are still undergoing changes. Those languages which resist the spirit of change are doomed and will never produce great harvests of thought and literature. When forms become fixed, the spirit either weakly accepts its imprisonment within them or rebels. All revolutions consist of the fight of the within against invasion by the without.

There was a great chapter in the history of life on this earth when some irresistible inner force in man found its way out into the scheme of things, and sent forth its triumphant mutinous voice, with the cry that it was not going to be overwhelmed from outside by the huge brute beast of a body. How helpless it appeared at the moment, but has it not nearly won? In our social life also, revolution breaks out when some power concentrates itself in outside arrangements and threatens to enslave for own purpose the power which we have within us.

When an organization which is a machine becomes a central force, political, commercial, educational or religious, it obstructs the free flow of inner life of the people and waylays and exploits it for the augmentation of its own power. Today, such concentration of power is fast multiplying on the outside and the cry of the oppressed spirit of man is in the air which struggles to free itself from the grip of screws and bolts of unmeaning obsessions.

Revolution must come and men must risk revilement and misunderstanding, especially from those who want to be comfortable, who put their faith in materialism, and who belong truly to the dead past and not to modern times, the past that had its age in distant antiquity when physical flesh and size predominated, and not the mind of man.

Purely physical dominance is mechanical and modern machines are merely exaggerating our bodies, lengthening and multiplying

our limbs. The modern mind, in its innate childishness, delights in this enormous bodily bulk, representing an inordinate material power, saying: "Let me have the big toy and no sentiment which can disturb it." It does not realize that in this we are returning to that antediluvian age which revelled in its production of gigantic physical frames, leaving no room for the freedom of the inner spirit.

All great human movements in the world are related to some great ideal. Some of you may say that such a doctrine of spirit has been in its death-throes for over a century and is now moribund; that we have nothing to rely upon but external forces and material foundations. But I say, on my part, that your doctrine was obsolete long ago. It was exploded in the springtime of life, when mere size was swept off the face of the world, and was replaced by man, brought naked into the heart of creation, man with his helpless body, but with his indomitable mind and spirit.

When I began my life as a poet, the writers among our educated community took their guidance from their English text-books which poured upon them lessons that did not fully saturate their minds. I suppose it was fortunate for me that I never in my life had the kind of academic training which is considered proper for a boy of respectable family. Though I cannot say I was altogether free from the influence that ruled young minds of those days, the course of my writings was nevertheless saved from the groove of imitative forms. In my versification, vocabulary and ideas, I yielded myself to the vagaries of an untutored fancy which brought castigation upon me from critics who were learned, and uproarious laughter from the witty. My ignorance combined with my heresy turned me into a literary outlaw.

When I began my career I was ridiculously young; in fact, I was the youngest of that band who had made themselves articulate. I had neither the protective armour of mature age, nor enough English to command respect. So in my seclusion of contempt and qualified encouragement I had my freedom. Gradually I grew up in years—for which, however, I claim no credit. Steadily I cut my way through derision and occasional patronage into a recognition in which the proportion of praise and blame was very much like that of land and water on our earth.

What gave me boldness when I was young was my early acquaintance with the old Vaishnava poems of Bengal, full of the freedom of metre and courage of expression. I think I was only twelve when these poems first began to be reprinted. I surreptitiously got hold of copies from the desks of my elders. For the edification of the young I must confess that this was not right for a boy of my age. I should have been passing my examinations and not following a path

that would lead to loss of marks. I must also admit that the greater part of these lyrics was erotic and not quite suited to a boy just about to reach his teens. But my imagination was fully occupied with the beauty of their forms and the music of their words; and their breath, heavily laden with voluptuousness, passed over my mind without distracting it.

My vagabondage in the path of my literary career had another reason. My father was the leader of a new religious movement, a strict monotheism based upon the teachings of the Upanishads. My countrymen in Bengal thought him almost as bad as a Christian, if not worse. So we were completely ostracized, which probably saved me from another disaster, that of imitating our own past.

Most of the members of my family had some gift—some were artists, some poets, some musicians and the whole atmosphere of our home was permeated with the spirit of creation. I had a deep sense, almost from infancy, of the beauty of Nature, an intimate feeling of companionship with the trees and the clouds, and felt in tune with the musical touch of the seasons in the air. At the same time, I had a peculiar susceptibility to human kindness. All these craved expression. The very earnestness of my emotions yearned to be true to themselves, though I was too immature to give their expression any perfection of form.

Since then I have gained a reputation in my country, but till very late a strong current of antagonism in a large section of my countrymen persisted. Some said that my poems did not spring from the national heart; some complained that they were incomprehensible; others that they were unwholesome. In fact, I have never had complete acceptance from my own people, and that too has been a blessing; for nothing is so demoralizing as unqualified success.

This is the history of my career. I wish I could reveal it more clearly through the narration of my own work in my own language. I hope that will be possible some day or other. Languages are jealous. They do not give up their best treasures to those who try to deal with them through an intermediary belonging to an alien rival. We have to court them in person and dance attendance on them. Poems are not like market commodities transferable. We cannot receive the smiles and glances of our sweetheart through an attorney, however, diligent and dutiful he may be.

I myself have tried to get at the wealth of beauty in the literature of the European languages, long before I gained a full right to their hospitality. When I was young I tried to approach Dante, unfortunately through an English translation. I failed utterly, and felt it my pious duty to desist. Dante remained a closed book to me.



I also wanted to know German literature and, by reading Heine in translation, I thought I had caught a glimpse of the beauty there. Fortunately I met a missionary lady from Germany and asked her help. I worked hard for some months, but being rather quick-witted, which is not a good quality, I was not persevering. I had the dangerous faculty which helps one to guess the meaning too easily. My teacher thought I had almost mastered the language, which was not true. I succeeded, however, in getting through Heine, like a man walking in sleep crossing unknown paths with ease, and I found immense pleasure.

Then I tried Goethe. But that was too ambitious. With the help of the little German I had learnt, I did go through Faust. I believe I found my entrance to the palace, not like one who has keys for all the doors, but as a casual visitor who is tolerated in some general guest-room, comfortable but not intimate. Properly speaking, I do not know my Goethe, and in the same way many other great luminaries are dusky to me.

This is as it should be. Man cannot reach the shrine if he does not make the pilgrimage. So, one must not hope to find anything true from my own language in translation.

In regard to music, I claim to be something of a musician myself. I have composed many songs which have defied the canons of orthodox propriety and good people are disgusted at the impudence of a man who is audacious only because he is untrained. But I persist, and God forgives me because I do not know what I do. Possibly that is the best way of doing things in the sphere of art. For I find that people blame, but also sing my songs, even if not always correctly.

Please do not think I am vain. I can judge myself objectively and can openly express admiration for my own work, because I am modest. I do not hesitate to say that my songs have found their place in the heart of my land, along with her flowers that are never exhausted, and that the folk of the future, in days of joy or sorrow or festival, will have to sing them. This too is the work of a revolutionist.

If I feel reluctant to speak about my own view of religion, it is because I have not come to my own religion through the portals of passive acceptance of a particular creed owing to some accident of birth. I was born to a family who were pioneers in the revival in our country of a religion based upon the utterance of Indian sages in the Upanishads. But owing to my idiosyncrasy of temperament, it was impossible for me to accept any religious teaching on the only ground that people in my surroundings believed it to be true. I could not persuade myself to imagine that I had religion simply because everybody whom I might trust believed in its value.

My religion is essentially a poet's religion. Its touch comes to me through the same unseen and trackless channels as does the inspiration of my music. My religious life has followed the same mysterious line of growth as has my poetical life. Somehow they are wedded to each other, and though their betrothal had a long period of ceremony, it was kept secret from me. I am not, I hope, boasting when I confess to my gift of poesy, an instrument of expression delicately responsive to the breath that comes from depth of feeling. From my infancy I had the keen sensitiveness which always kept my mind tingling with consciousness of the world around me, natural and human.

I had been blessed with that sense of wonder which gives a child his right of entry into the treasure-house of mystery which is in the heart of existence. I neglected my studies because they rudely summoned me away from the world around me, which was my friend and my companion, and when I was thirteen I freed myself from the clutch of an educational system that tried to keep me imprisoned within the stone-walls of lessons.

I had a vague notion as to who or what it was that touched my heart's chords, like the infant which does not know its mother's name, or who or what she is. The feeling which I always had was a deep satisfaction of personality that flowed into my nature through living channels of communication from all sides.

It was a great thing for me that my consciousness was never dull about the facts of the surrounding world. That the cloud was the cloud, that a flower was a flower, was enough, because they directly spoke to me, because I could not be indifferent to them. I still remember the very moment, one afternoon, when coming back from school I alighted from the carriage and suddenly saw in the sky, behind the upper terrace of our house, an exuberance of deep, dark rain-clouds lavishing rich, cool shadows on the atmosphere. The marvel of it, the very generosity of its presence, gave me a joy which was freedom, the freedom we feel in the love of our dear friend.

There is an illustration I have made use of in another paper, in which I supposed that a stranger from some other planet has paid a visit to our earth and happens to hear the sound of a human voice on the gramophone. All that is obvious to him, and most seemingly active, is the revolving disk; he is unable to discover the personal truth that lies behind, and so might accept the impersonal scientific fact of the disk as final—the fact that could be touched and measured. He would wonder how it could be possible for a machine to speak to the soul. Then if in pursuing the mystery, he should suddenly come to the heart of the music through a meeting with the composer, he would at once understand the meaning of that music as a personal communication.

Mere information of facts, mere discovery of power, belongs to the outside and not to the inner soul of things. Gladness is the one criterion of truth as we know when we have touched Truth by the music it gives, by the joy of the greeting it sends forth to the truth in us. That is true foundation of all religions; it is not in dogma. As I have said before, it is not as ether waves that we receive light; the morning does not wait for some scientist for its introduction to us. In the same way, we touch the infinite reality immediately within us only when we perceive the pure truth of love or goodness, not through the explanation of theologians, not through the erudite discussion of ethical doctrines.

I have already confessed that my religion is a poet's religion; all that I feel about it is from vision and not from knowledge. I frankly say that I cannot satisfactorily answer questions about the problem of evil, or about what happens after death. And yet I am sure that there have come moments when my soul has touched the infinite and has become intensely conscious of it through the illumination of joy. It has been said in our Upanishads that our mind and our words come away baffled from the supreme Truth, but he who knows That, through the immediate joy of his own soul, is saved from all doubts and fears.

In the night we stumble over things and become acutely conscious of their individual separateness, but the day reveals the great unity which embraces them. And the man, whose inner vision is bathed in an illumination of his consciousness, at once realizes the spiritual unity reigning supreme over all differences of race and his mind no longer awkwardly stumbles over individual facts of separateness in the human world, accepting them as final; he realizes that peace is in the inner harmony which dwells in truth, and not in any outer adjustments; and that beauty carries an eternal assurance of our spiritual relationship to reality, which waits for its perfection in the response of our love.

## II

The renowned Vedic commentator, Sayanacharya, says:

*Jajne hutavasishtasya odanasya*

*Sarvagatkaranaabbuta brahmabhedena stutih kriyate.*

The food offering which is left over after the completion of sacrificial rites is praised because it is symbolical of Brahma, the original source of the universe.

According to this explanation, Brahma is boundless in his superfluity which inevitably finds its expression in the eternal world process. Here we have the doctrine of the genesis of creation, and,

therefore of the origin of art. Of all living creatures in the world, man has his vital and mental energy vastly in excess of his need, which urges him to work in various lines of creation for its own sake. Like Brahma himself, he takes joy in productions that are unnecessary to him, and, therefore representing his extravagance and not his hand-to-mouth penury. The voice that is just enough can speak and cry to the extent needed for everyday use, but that which is abundant sings, and in it we find our joy. Art reveals man's wealth of life, which seeks its freedom in form of perfection which are an end in themselves.

All that is inert and inanimate is limited to the bare fact of existence. Life is perpetually creative because it contains in itself that surplus which ever overflows the boundaries of the immediate time and space, restlessly pursuing its adventure of expression in the varied forms of self-realization. Our living body has its vital organs that are important in maintaining its efficiency, but this body is not a mere convenient sac for the purpose of holding stomach, heart, lungs and brains; it is an image—its highest value is in the fact that it communicates its personality. It has colour, shape and movement, most of which belong to the superfluous, that are needed only for self-expression and not for self-preservation.

This living atmosphere of superfluity in man is dominated by his imagination, as the earth's atmosphere by the light. It helps us to integrate desultory facts in a vision of harmony and then to translate it into our activities for the very joy of its perfection, it invokes in us the Universal Man who is the seer and the doer of all times and countries. The immediate consciousness of reality in its purest form, unobscured by the shadow of self-interest, irrespective of moral or utilitarian recommendation, gives us joy as does the self-revealing personality of our own. What in common language we call beauty, which is in harmony of lines, colours, sounds, or in grouping of words or thoughts, delights us only because we cannot help admitting a truth in it that is ultimate. "Love is enough", the poet has said; it carries its own explanation, the joy of which can only be expressed in a form of art which also has that finality. Love gives evidence to something which is outside us but which intensely exists and thus stimulates the sense of our own existence. It radiantly reveals the reality of its objects, though these may lack qualities that are valuable or brilliant.

The 'I am' in me realizes its own extension, its own infinity whenever it truly realizes something else. Unfortunately, owing to our limitations and a thousand and one preoccupations, a great part of our world, though closely surrounding us, is far away from the lamppost of our attention: it is dim, it passes by as a caravan of

shadows, like the landscape seen in the night from the window of an illuminated railway compartment; the passenger knows that the outside world exists, that it is important, but for the time being the railway carriage for him is far more significant. If among the innumerable objects in this world there be a few that come under the full illumination of our soul and thus assume reality for us, they constantly cry to our creative mind for a permanent representation. They belong to the same domain as the desire of ours which represents the longing for the permanence of our own self.

I do not mean to say that things to which we are bound by the tie of self-interest have the inspiration of reality; on the contrary, these are eclipsed by the shadow of our own self. The servant is not more real to us than the beloved. The narrow emphasis of utility diverts our attention from the complete man to the merely useful man. The thick label of market-price obliterates the ultimate value of reality.

The fact that we exist has its truth in the fact that everything else does exist, and the 'I am' in me crosses its finitude whenever it deeply realizes itself in the 'Thou art'. This crossing of the limit produces joy, the joy that we have in beauty, in love, in greatness. Self-forgetting, and in a higher degree, self-sacrifice, is our acknowledgement of our experience of the infinite. This is the philosophy which explains our joy in all arts, the arts that in their creations intensify the sense of the unity which is the unity of truth we carry within ourselves. The personality in me is a self-conscious principle of a living unity: it at once comprehends and yet transcends all the details of facts that are individually mine, my knowledge, feeling, wish and will, my memory, my hope, my love, my activities, and all my belongings. This personality which has the sense of the 'One' in its nature, realizes it in things, thoughts and facts made into units. The principle of unity which it contains is more or less perfectly satisfied in a beautiful face or a picture, a poem, a song, a character or a harmony of inter-related ideas or facts and then for it these things become intensely real, and, therefore joyful. Its standard of reality, the reality that has its perfect revelation in a perfection of harmony, is hurt when there is a consciousness of discord, because discord is against the fundamental unity which is in its centre.

All other facts have come to us through the gradual course of our experience, and our knowledge of them is constantly undergoing contradictory changes through the discovery of new data. We can never be sure that we have come to know the final character of anything that there is. But such a knowledge has come to us immediately with a conviction which needs no arguments to support it. It is this, that all my activities have their sources in this personality

of mine, which is indefinable and yet about the truth of which I am more certain than anything in this world. Though all the direct evidence that can be weighed and measured supports the fact that only my fingers are producing marks on the paper, yet no sane man ever can doubt that it is not these mechanical movements that are the true origin of my writings but some entity that can never be known, unless known through sympathy. Thus we have come to realize in our own person the two aspects of activities, one of which is the aspect of law represented in the medium, and the other the aspect of will residing in the personality.

Limitation of the unlimited is personality; God is personal where he creates.

He accepts the limits of his own law and the play goes on, which is this world whose reality is in its relation to the person. Things are distinct not in their essence but in their appearance; in other words, in their relation to one to whom they appear. This is art, the truth of which is not in substance or logic, but in expression. Abstract truth may belong to science and metaphysics, but the world of reality belongs to Art.

The world as an art is the play of the Supreme Person revelling in image making. Try to find out the ingredients of the image—they elude you, they never reveal to you the eternal secret of appearance. In your effort to capture life as expressed in living tissue, you will find carbon, nitrogen and many other things utterly unlike life, but never life itself. The appearance does not offer any commentary of its self through its material. You may call it *maya* and pretend to disbelieve it, but the great artist, the *mayavin*, is not hurt. For art is *maya*, it has no other explanation but that it seems to be what it is. It never tries to conceal its evasiveness, it mocks even its own definition and plays the game of hide-and-seek through its constant flight in changes.

And thus life, which is an incessant explosion of freedom, finds its metre in a continual falling back in depth. Every day is a death, every moment even. If not, there would be an amorphous desert of deathlessness eternally dumb and still. So life is *maya*, as moralists love to say, it is and is not. All that we find in it is the rhythm through which it shows itself. Are rocks and minerals any better? Has not science shown us the fact that the ultimate difference between one element and another is only that of rhythm? The fundamental distinction of gold from mercury lies merely in the difference of rhythm in their respective atomic constitutions, like the distinction of the kind from his subject which is not in their different constituents, but in the different metres of their situation

and circumstance. There you find behind the scene the Artist, the Magician of rhythm, who imparts an appearance of substance to the unsubstantial.

What is rhythm? It is the movement generated and regulated by harmonious restriction. This is the creative force in the hand of the artist. So long as words remain in uncadenced prose form, they do not give any lasting feeling of reality. The moment they are taken and put into rhythm they vibrate into a radiance. It is the same with the rose. In the pulp of its petals you may find everything that went to make the rose, but the rose which is *maya*, an image, is lost; its finality which has the touch of the infinite is gone. The rose appears to me to be still, but because of its metre of composition it has a lyric of movement within that stillness, which is the same as the dynamic quality of a picture that has a perfect harmony. It produces a music in our consciousness by giving it a swing of motion synchronous with its own. Had the picture consisted of a disharmonious aggregate of colours and lines, it would be deadly still.

In perfect rhythm, the art-form becomes like the stars which in their seeming stillness are never still, like a motionless flame that is nothing but movement. A great picture is always speaking, but news from a newspaper, even of some tragic happening, is still-born. Some news may be a mere commonplace in the obscurity of a journal, but give it a proper rhythm and it will never cease to shine. That is art. It has the magic wand which gives undying reality to all things it touches, and relates them to the personal being in us. We stand before its productions and say: I know you as I know myself, you are real.

A Chinese friend of mine, while travelling with me through the streets of Peking, suddenly, with great excitement, called my attention to a donkey. Ordinarily a donkey does not have any special force of truth for us, except when it kicks us or when we need its reluctant service. But in such cases, the truth is not emphasized in the donkey but in some purpose or bodily pain exterior to it. The behaviour of my Chinese friend at once reminded me of the Chinese poems in which the delightful sense of reality is so spontaneously felt and so simply expressed.

This sensitiveness to the touch of things, such abundant delight in the recognition of them, is obstructed when insistent purposes become innumerable and intricate in our society, when problems crowd in our path clamouring for attention, and life's movement is impeded with things and thoughts too difficult for a harmonious assimilation.

This has been growing evident every day in the modern age, which gives more time to the acquisition of life's equipment than to the

enjoyment of it. In fact, life itself is made secondary to life's materials, even like a garden buried under the bricks gathered for the garden wall. Somehow the mania for bricks and mortar grows, the kingdom of rubbish dominates, the days of spring are made futile and the flowers never come.

Our modern mind, a hasty tourist, in its rush over the miscellaneous, ransacks cheap markets of curios which mostly are delusions. This happens because its natural sensibility for simple aspects of existence is dulled by constant preoccupations that divert it. The literature that it produces seems always to be poking her nose into out-of-the-way places for things and effects that are out of the common. She racks her resources in order to be striking. She elaborates inconstant changes in style, as in modern millinery, and the product suggests more the polish of steel than the bloom of life.

Fashions in literature that rapidly tire of themselves seldom come from the depth. They belong to the frothy rush of the surface, with its boisterous clamour for recognition of the moment. Such literature, by its very strain, exhausts its inner development and quickly passes through outer changes like autumn leaves, produces with the help of paints and at patches an up-to-dateness, shaming its own appearance of the immediately preceding date. Its expressions are often grimaces, like the cactus of the desert which lacks modesty in its distortions and peace in its thorns, in whose attitude an aggressive discourtesy bristles up, suggesting a forced pride of poverty. We often come across its analogy in some of the modern writings which are difficult to ignore because of their prickly surprises and paradoxical gesticulations. Wisdom is not rare in these works, but it is a wisdom that has lost confidence in its serene dignity, afraid of being ignored by crowds which are attracted by the extravagant and the unusual. It is sad to see wisdom struggling to seem clever, a prophet arrayed in caps and bells before an admiring multitude.

But in all great arts, literary or otherwise, man has expressed his feelings that are usual in a form that is unique and yet not abnormal. When Wordsworth described in his poem a life deserted by love, he invoked for his art the usual pathos expected by all normal minds in connection with such a subject. But the picture in which he incarnated the sentiment was unexpected and yet every sane reader acknowledges it with joy when the image is held before him:

.... a forsaken bird's nest filled with snow  
Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine.

On the other hand, I have read some modern writing in which the coming out of the stars in the evening is described as the sudden eruption of disease in the bloated body of darkness. The writer seems afraid to own the feeling of a cool purity in the star-sprinkled night,



which is usual lest he should be found out as commonplace. From the point of realism the image may not be wholly inappropriate and may be considered as outrageously virile in its unshrinking incivility. But this is not art; this is a jerky shriek, something like the convulsive advertisement of the modern market that exploits mob psychology against its inattention. To be tempted to create an illusion of forcefulness through an over-emphasis of abnormality is a sign of anaesthesia. It is the waning vigour of imagination which employs desperate dexterity in the present-day art for producing shocks in order to poke out into a glare the sensation of the unaccustomed. When we find that the literature of any period is laborious in the pursuit of a spurious novelty in its manner and matter, we must know that it is the symptom of old age, of anaemic sensibility which seeks to stimulate its palsied taste with the pungency of indecency and the tingling touch of intemperance.

It has been explained to me that these symptoms mostly are the outcome of a reaction against the last-century literature which developed a mannerism too daintily saccharin, unmanly in the luxury of its toilet and over-delicacy of its expressions. It seemed to have reached an extreme limit of refinement which almost codified its conventions, making it easy for the timid talents to reach a comfortable level of literary respectability. This explanation may be true; but unfortunately reactions seldom have the repose of spontaneity, they often represent the obverse side of the mintage which they try to repudiate as false. A reaction against a particular mannerism is liable to produce its own mannerism in a militant fashion, using the toilet preparation of the war paint, deliberately manufactured style of primitive rudeness. Tired of the elaborately planned flower-beds, the gardener proceeds with grim determination to set up everywhere artificial rocks, avoiding natural inspiration of rhythm in deference to a fashion of tyranny which itself is a tyranny of fashion. The same herd instinct is followed in a cult of rebellion as it was in the cult of conformity and the defiance, which is a mere counteraction of obedience, also shows obedience in a defiant fashion. Fanaticism of virility produces a brawny athleticism meant for a circus and not the natural chivalry which is modest but invincible, claiming its sovereign seat of honour in all arts.

It has often been said by its advocates that this show of the rudely loud and cheaply lurid in art has its justification in the unbiased recognition of facts as such; and according to them realism must not be shunned even if it be ragged and evil-smelling. But when it does not concern science but concerns the arts we must draw a distinction between realism and reality. In its own wide perspective of normal environment, disease is a reality which has to be acknowledged in literature. But disease in a hospital is realism fit for the use of science.

It is an abstraction, which if allowed to haunt literature, may assume a startling appearance because of its unreality. Such vagrant spectres do not have a proper modulation in a normal surrounding; and they offer a false proportion in their feature because the proportion of their environment is tampered with. Such a curtailment of the essential is not art, but a trick which exploits mutilation in order to assert a false claim to reality. Unfortunately men are not rare who believe that what forcibly startles them allows them to see more than the facts which are balanced and restrained, which they have to woo and win. Very likely, owing to the lack of leisure, such persons are growing in number, and the dark cellars of sex-psychology and drug-stores of moral virulence are burgled to give them the stimulus which they wish to believe to be the stimulus of aesthetic reality.

I know a simple line sung by some primitive folk in our neighbourhood which I translate thus: "My heart is like a pebble-bed hiding a foolish stream." The psycho-analyst may classify it as an instance of repressed desire and thus at once degrade it to a mere specimen advertising a supposed fact, as it does a piece of coal suspected of having smuggled within its dark the flaming wine of the sun of a forgotten age. But it is literature; and what might have been the original stimulus that startled this thought into a song, the significant fact about it is that it has taken the shape of an image, a creation of a uniquely personal and yet universal character. The facts of the repression of a desire are numerous common, but this particular expression is singularly uncommon. The listener's mind is touched not because it is a psychological fact, but because it is an individual poem, representing a personal reality, belonging to all time and place in the human world.

But this is not all. This poem no doubt owed its form to the touch of the person who produced it; but at the same time with a gesture of utter detachment, it has transcended its material—the emotional mood of the author. It has gained its freedom from any biographical bondage by taking a rhythmic perfection which is precious in its own exclusive merit. There is a poem which confesses by its title its origin in a mood of dejection. Nobody can say that to a lucid mind the feeling of despondency has anything pleasantly memorable. Yet these verses are not allowed to be forgotten, because directly a poem is fashioned, it is eternally freed from its genesis, it minimizes its history and emphasizes its independence. The sorrow which was solely personal in an emperor was liberated directly, it took the form of verses in stone, it became a triumph of lament, an overflow of delight, hiding the black boulder of its suffering source. The same thing is true of all creation. A dewdrop is a perfect integrity that has no filial memory of its parentage.

When I use the word 'creation', I mean that through it some imponderable abstractions have assumed a concrete unity in its relation

to us. Its substance can be analyzed but not this unity which is in its self-introduction. Literature as an art offers us the mystery which is in its unity.

We read the poem :

Never seek to tell thy love  
Love that never told can be;  
For the gentle wind does move  
Silently, invisibly.

I told my love, I told my love,  
I told her all my heart;  
Trembling cold in ghastly fears  
Ah ! she did depart.

Soon as she was gone from me  
A traveller came by;  
Silently, invisibly  
He took her with a sigh.

It has its grammar, its vocabulary. When we divide them part by part and try to torture out a confession from them, the poem which is 'one' departs like the gentle wind, silently, invisibly. No one knows how it exceeds all its parts, transcends all its laws, and communicates with the person. The significance which is in unity is an eternal wonder.

As for the definite meaning of the poem, we may have our doubts. If it were told in ordinary prose, we might feel impatient and be roused to contradict it. We would certainly have asked for an explanation as to who the traveller was and why he took away love without any reasonable provocation. But in this poem we need not ask for an explanation unless we are hopelessly addicted to meaning-collection which is like the collection mania for dead butterflies. The poem as a creation, which is something more than as an idea, inevitably conquers our attention; and any meaning which we feel in its words is like the feeling in a beautiful face of a smile that is inscrutable, elusive and profoundly satisfactory.

The unity as a poem introduces itself in a rhythmic language in a gesture of character. Rhythm is not merely in some measured blending of words, but in a significant adjustment of ideas, in a music of thought produced by a subtle principle of distribution, which is not primarily logical but evidential. The meaning which the word 'character' contains is difficult to define. It is comprehended in a special grouping of aspects which gives it an irresistible impetus. The combination it represents

may be uncouth, may be unfinished, discordant; yet it has a dynamic vigour in its totality which claims recognition, often against our wishes, for the assent of our reason. An avalanche has a character, which even a heavier pile of snow has not; its character is in its massive movement, its incalculable possibilities.

It is for the artist to remind the world that with the truth of our expression we grow in truth. When the man-made world is less an expression of man's creative soul than a mechanical device for some purpose of power, then it hardens itself, acquiring proficiency at the cost of the subtle suggestiveness of living growth. In his creative activities man makes nature instinct with his own life and love. But with his utilitarian energies he fights Nature, banishes her from his world, deforms and defiles her with the ugliness of his ambitions.

This world of man's own manufacture, with its discordant shrieks and swagger, impresses on him the scheme of a universe which has no touch of the person and, therefore, no ultimate significance. All the great civilizations that have become extinct must have come to their end through such wrong expression of humanity; through parasitism on a gigantic scale bred by wealth, by man's clinging reliance on material resources; through a scoffing spirit of denial, of negation, robbing us of our means of sustenance in the path of truth.

It is for the artist to proclaim his faith in the everlasting yes—to say: "I believe that there is an ideal hovering over and permeating the earth, an ideal of that Paradise which is not the mere outcome of fancy, but the ultimate reality in which all things dwell and move."

I believe that the vision of Paradise is to be seen in the sunlight and the green of the earth, in the beauty of the human face and the wealth of human life, even in objects that are seemingly insignificant and unprepossessing. Everywhere in this earth the spirit of Paradise is awake and sending forth its voice. It reaches our inner ear without our knowing it. It tunes our harp of life which sends our aspiration in music beyond the finite, not only in prayers and hopes, but also in temples which are flames of fire in stone, in pictures which are dreams made everlasting, in the dance which is ecstatic meditation in the still centre of movement.



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## A POET'S SCHOOL

FROM QUESTIONS THAT have often been put to me, I have come to feel that the public claims an apology from the poet for having founded a school, as I in my rashness have done. One must admit that the silkworm which spins and the butterfly that floats on the air represent two different stages of existence, contrary to each other. The silkworm seems to have a cash value credited in its favour somewhere in Nature's accounting department, according to the amount of the task it performs. But the butterfly is irresponsible. The significance which it may possess has neither weight nor use and is lightly carried on its pair of dancing wings. Perhaps it pleases someone in the heart of the sunlight, the Lord Treasurer of colours, who has nothing to do with the account book and has a perfect mastery in the great art of wastefulness.

The poet may be compared to that foolish butterfly. He also tries to translate all the festive colours of creation in the vibration of his verses. Then why should he imprison himself in an interminable coil of duty, bringing out some good, tough and fairly respectable result? Why should he make himself accountable to those sane people who would judge the merit of his produce by the amount of profit it will bring?

I suppose this individual poet's answer would be, that when he brought together a few boys, one sunny day in winter, among the warm shadows of the *sal* trees—strong, straight and tall, with branches of a dignified moderation—he started to write a poem in a medium not of words.

In these self-conscious days of psycho-analysis clever minds have discovered the secret spring of poetry in some obscure stratum of

repressed freedom, in some constant fretfulness of thwarted self-realization. Evidently in this case they were right. The phantom of my long-ago boyhood did come to haunt the ruined opportunities of its early beginning; it sought to live in the lives of other boys, to build up its missing paradise, as only children can do with ingredients which may not have any orthodox material, prescribed measure, or standard value.

This brings to my mind the name of another poet of ancient India. Kalidasa—the story of whose life has not been written, but can easily be guessed. Fortunately for the scholars, he has left behind him no clear indication of his birth-place, and thus they have a subject that oblivious time has left amply vacant for an endless variety of disagreement. My scholarship does not pretend to go deep, but I remember having read somewhere that he was born in beautiful Kashmir. Since then I left off reading discussions about his birth-place for the fear of meeting with some learned contradiction equally convincing. Anyhow it is perfectly in the fitness of things that Kalidasa should be born in Kashmir—and I envy him, for I was born in Calcutta.

But psycho-analysis need not be disappointed, for he was banished from there to a city in the plains—and his whole poem of *Meghaduta* reverberates with the music of a sorrow that had its crown of suffering 'in remembering happier things'. Is it not significant that in this poem, the lover's errant fancy, in its quest of the beloved who dwelt in the paradise of eternal beauty, lingered with a deliberate delay of enjoyment round every hill, stream, or forest over which it passed; watched the grateful dark eyes of the peasant girls welcoming the rain-laden clouds of June; listened to some village elder reciting under the banyan tree a well-known love legend that ever remained fresh with the tears and smiles of generations of simple hearts? Do we not feel in all this the prisoner of the stony-hearted city revelling in a vision of joy that, in his imaginary journey, followed him from hill to hill, waited at every turn of the path which bore the finger-posts of heaven for separated lovers banished on the earth?

It was not a physical home-sickness from which the poet suffered, it was something far more fundamental—the home-sickness of the soul. We feel in almost all his works the oppressive atmosphere of the King's palaces of those days, impervious with things of luxury, thick with the callousness of self-indulgence, albeit an atmosphere of refined culture, of an extravagant civilization.

The poet in the royal court lived in banishment—banishment from the immediate presence of the eternal. He knew, it was not merely his own banishment, but that of the whole age to which he was born, the age that had gathered its wealth and missed its well-being, built its storehouse of things and lost its background of the great universe.

What was the form in which his desire for perfection persistently appeared in his drama and poems? It was in that of the *tapovana*, the forest dwelling of the patriarchal community of ancient India. Those who are familiar with Sanskrit literature well know that this was not a colony of people with a primitive culture and mind. They were seekers of truth, for the sake of which they lived in an atmosphere of purity, but not of puritanism; of the simple life, but not the life of self-mortification. They did not advocate celibacy and they had constant inter-communication with the other people who had to live the life of worldly interest. Their aim and endeavour have briefly been suggested in the *Upanishad* in these lines:

*Te sarvagam sarvatah prapya dhira  
yuktatmanah sarvamevavisanti.*

Those men of serene mind enter into the All, having realized and being everywhere in union with the omnipresent Spirit.

It was never a philosophy of renunciation of a negative character, but of a realization completely comprehensive. However, the tortured mind of Kalidasa, in the prosperous city of Ujjaini and the glorious period of Vikramaditya, closely pressed by all-obstructing things and all-devouring self, made his thoughts hover round the vision of *tapovana* for his inspiration of life, light and freedom.

It was not a deliberate copy, but a natural coincidence, that a poet of modern India also had a similar vision when he felt within him the misery of a spiritual banishment. In the time of Kalidasa the people vividly believed in the ideal of *tapovana*, the forest colony, and there can be no doubt that even in that late age there were communities of men living in the heart of nature, not ascetics fiercely in love with a lingering suicide, but men of serene sanity who sought to realize the spiritual meaning of their life. And therefore when Kalidasa sang of the *tapovana*, his poems found their immediate communion in the living faith of his hearers. But today the idea of the *tapovana* has lost any definite outline of reality, and has retreated into the faraway phantom land of legend : therefore, in a modern poem, it would merely be poetical, its meaning judged by a literary standard of appraisal. Then again, the spirit of the *tapovana* in the purity of its original shape would be a fantastic anachronism in the present age. Therefore, in order to be real, it must find its reincarnation under modern conditions of life, and be the same in truth, not merely identical in fact. It was this which made the modern poet's heart crave to compose his poem in a tangible language.

But I must give the history in some detail.

Civilized man has come far away from the orbit of his normal life.

He has gradually formed and intensified some habits that are like those of the bees, for adapting himself to his hive-world. We so often see modern men suffering from ennui, from world-weariness, from a spirit of rebellion against their environment for no reasonable cause whatever. Social revolutions are constantly ushered in with a suicidal violence that has its origin in our dissatisfaction with our hive-wall arrangement—the too exclusive enclosure that deprives us of the perspective which is so much needed to give us the proper proportion in our art of living. All this is an indication that man has not really been moulded in the model of the bee, and therefore he becomes recklessly anti-social when his freedom to be more than social is ignored.

In our highly complex modern conditions, mechanical forces are organized with such efficiency that the materials produced grow far in advance of man's selective and assimilative capacity to simplify them into harmony with his nature and needs. Such an intemperate overgrowth of things, like the rank vegetation of the tropics, creates confinement for man. The nest is simple, it has an easy relationship with the sky; the cage is complex and costly, it is too much itself, excommunicating whatever lies outside. And modern man is busy building his cage, fast developing his parasitism on the monster, *Thing*, whom he allows to envelop him on all sides. He is always occupied in adapting himself to its dead angularities, limits himself to its limitations, and merely becomes a part of it.

This talk of mine may seem too oriental to some of my hearers who, I am told, believe that a constant high pressure of living produced by an artificially cultivated hunger for things, generates and feeds the energy that drives civilization upon its endless journey. Personally, I do not believe that this has ever been the principal driving force leading to its eminence any great civilization of which we know in history. But I have broached this subject not for its full discussion, but to explain the conduct of a poet in his attempt to trespass into a domain reserved for the expert and for those who have academic distinction.

I was born in what was then the metropolis of British India. Our ancestors came floating to Calcutta upon the earliest tide of the fluctuating fortune of the East India Company. The conventional code of life for our family thereupon became a confluence of three cultures, the Hindu, the Mahomedan and the British. My grandfather belonged to that period when an amplitude of dress and courtesy and a generous leisure was gradually being clipped and curtailed into Victorian manners, economical in time, in ceremonies and in the dignity of personal appearance. This will show that I came to a world in which the modern citybred spirit of progress had just begun driving its triumphal car over the luscious green life of our ancient village community.



Though the trampling process was almost complete around me, yet the wailing cry of the past was still lingering over the wreckage. I had often listened to my eldest brother describing with the poignancy of a hopeless regret a society, hospitable, sweet with the old-world aroma of natural kindliness, full of a simple faith and the ceremonial poetry of life. But all this was a vanishing shadow behind me in the golden haze of a twilight horizon—the all-pervading fact around my boyhood being the modern city, newly built by a company of western traders, and the spirit of the modern time seeking its unaccustomed path into our life, stumbling against countless anomalies. But it always is a surprise to me to think that though this closed-up hardness of a city was my only experience of the world, yet my mind was constantly haunted by the home-sick fancies of an exile.

It seems that the sub-conscious remembrance of some primeval dwelling-place where, in our ancestors' minds were figured and voiced the mysteries of the inarticulate rocks, the rushing water and the dark whispers of the forest, was constantly stirring my blood with its call. Some shadow-haunted living reminiscence in me seemed to ache for the pre-natal cradle and playground it once shared with the primal life in the illimitable magic of land, water and air. The thin, shrill cry of the high-flying kite in the blazing sun of a dazed Indian midday sent to a solitary boy the signal of a dumb distant kinship. The few cocoanut palm growing by the boundary wall of our house, like some war captives from an older army of invaders of this earth, spoke to me of the eternal companionship which the great brotherhood of trees has ever offered to man. They made my heart wistful with the invitation of the forest. I had the good fortune of answering this invitation in person a few years later when, as a little boy of ten, I stood alone on the Himalayas under the shade of great *deodars*, awed by the dark dignity of life's first-born aristocracy, by its sturdy fortitude that was terrible as well as courteous.

Looking back upon those moments of my boyhood days when all my mind seemed to float poised upon a large feeling of the sky, of the light, and to mingle with the brown earth in its glistening grass, I cannot help believing that my Indian ancestry had left deep in my being the legacy of its philosophy, the philosophy which speaks of fulfilment through harmony with all things. For good or for evil it has the effect of arousing a great desire in us for seeking our freedom, not in the man-made world but in the depth of the universe, and makes us offer our reverence to the divinity inherent in fire, water and trees, in everything moving and growing. The founding of my school had its origin in the memory of that longing for freedom, the memory which seems to go back beyond the sky-line of my birth.

Freedom in the mere sense of independence has no content, and therefore no meaning. Perfect freedom lies in the perfect harmony of relationship which we realize in this world—not through our response to it in *knowing*, but in *being*. Objects of knowledge maintain an infinite distance from us who are the knowers. For knowledge is not union. Therefore the further world of freedom awaits us there where we reach truth, not through feeling it by our sense, or knowing it by reason, but through the union of perfect sympathy.

Children with the freshness of their senses come directly to an intimacy with this world. This is the first great gift they have. They must accept it naked and simple, and must never again lose their power of immediate communication with it. For our perfection we have to be vitally savage and mentally civilized; we should have the gift to be natural with nature and human with human society. The misery which I felt was owing to the crowded solitude in which I dwelt in a city where man was everywhere, with never a gap for the immense non-human. My banished soul sitting in the civilized isolation of town-life cried within me for the enlargement of the horizon of its comprehension. I was like the torn-away line of a verse, always in a state of suspense while the other line, to which it rhymed and which could give it fullness, was smudged away into some misty, undecipherable distance. The inexpensive power to be happy which, along with other children, I brought with me to this world, was being constantly worn away by friction with the brick-and-mortar arrangement of life, by monotonously mechanical habits and the customary code of respectability.

In the usual course I was sent to school, but possibly my suffering was unusual, greater than that of most other children. The non-civilized in me was sensitive : it had the great thirst for colour, for music, for movement of life. Our city-built education took no heed of that living fact. It had its luggage-van waiting for branded bales of marketable result. The relative proportion of the non-civilized and civilized in man should be in the proportion of water and land on our globe, the former predominating. But the school had for its object a continual reclamation of the non-civilized. Such a drain of the fluid element causes an aridity which may not be considered deplorable under city conditions. But my nature never got accustomed to those conditions, to the callous decency of the pavement. The non-civilized triumphed in me only too soon and drove me away from my school when I had just entered my teens. I found myself stranded on a solitary island of ignorance, and had to rely solely upon my own instincts to build up my education from the very beginning.

This reminds me that when I was young I had the great good fortune of coming upon a Bengali translation of Robinson-Crusoe. I

still believe that it is one of the best books for boys that has ever been written. I have already spoken in this paper about my longing when young to run away from my own self and be one with everything in nature. I have described this mood as particularly Indian, the outcome of a traditional desire for the expansion of consciousness. One has to admit that such a desire is too subjective in its character, but this is inevitable in our geographical circumstances. We live under the extortionate tyranny of the tropics, paying heavy toll every moment for the barest right of existence. The heat, the damp, the unspeakable fecundity of minute life feeding upon big life, the perpetual sources of irritation, visible and invisible, leave very little margin of capital for extravagant experiments.

Excess of energy seeks obstacles for its self-realization. That is why we find so often in western literature a constant emphasis upon the malignant aspect of nature, in whom the people of the West seem to delight to discover an enemy for the sheer enjoyment of challenging her to fight. The reason which made Alexander express his desire to find other worlds to conquer when his conquest in this world was completed, makes these enormously vital people desire, when they have some respite in their sublime mission of fighting against objects that are noxious, to go out of their way to spread their coat-tails in other peoples' thorough-fares and to claim indemnity when these are trodden upon. In order to take the thrilling risk of hurting themselves they are ready to welcome endless trouble to hurt others who are inoffensive—the beautiful birds which happen to know how to fly away, the timid beasts which have the advantage of inhabiting inaccessible regions, and—but I avoid the discourtesy of mentioning higher races in this connection.

Life's fulfilment finds constant contradictions in its path but these are necessary for the sake of its advance. The stream is saved from the sluggishness of its current by the perpetual opposition of the soil through which it must cut its way and which forms its banks. The spirit of fight belongs to the genius of life. The tuning of an instrument has to be done, not because it reveals a proficient perseverance in the face of difficulty, but because it helps music to be perfectly realized. Let us rejoice that, in the West, life's instrument is being tuned in all its different chords, owing to the great fact that the West has a triumphant pleasure in its struggle of contest with obstacles. The spirit of creation in the heart of the universe will never allow, for its own sake, obstacles to be completely removed. It is only because positive truth lies in that ideal of perfection, which has to be won by our own endeavour in order to make it our own, that the spirit of fight is great, and not in the exhibition of a muscular athleticism or the rude barbarism of a ravenous rapacity.

In Robinson Crusoe, the delight of the union with nature finds its expression in a story of adventure in which the solitary man is face to face with solitary nature, coaxing her, co-operating with her, exploring her secrets, using all his faculties to win her help. The joy I felt in reading this book was not in sharing the pride of a human success against the closed fist of a parsimonious nature, but in the active realization of harmony with her through intelligently determined dealings, the natural conclusion of which was success. And this is the heroic love- adventure of the West, the active wooing of the earth.

I remember how in my youth, the feeling of intense delight and wonder once followed me in my railway journey across Europe from Brindisi to Calais, when I realized the vast beauty of this continent everywhere blossoming in a glow of health and richness under the age-long attention of her chivalrous lover, Western humanity. He had gained her, made her his own, unlocked the inexhaustible generosity of her heart. And I had intently wished that the introspective vision of the universal soul, which an Eastern devotee realizes in the solitude of his mind, could be united with this spirit of its outward expression in service, the exercise of will in unfolding the wealth of beauty and well-being from its shy obscurity to the light.

I remember the morning when a beggar woman in a Bengal village gathered in the loose end of her *sari* the stale flowers that were about to be thrown away from the vase on my table; and with an ecstatic expression of tenderness she buried her face in them, exclaiming "Ah, Beloved of my Heart!" Her eyes could easily pierce the veil of the outward form and reach the realm of the infinite in these flowers where she found the intimate touch of her Beloved. But in spite of it all she lacked that energy of worship, the Western form of direct divine service, which helps the earth to bring out her flowers and spread the reign of beauty on the desolate dust. I refuse to think that the twin spirits of the East and the West, the Mary and Martha, can never meet to make perfect the realization of truth. And in spite of our material poverty and the antagonism of time I wait patiently for this meeting.

Robinson Crusoe's island comes to my mind when I think of an institution where the first great lesson in the perfect union of man and nature, not only through love but through active communication, can be had unobstructed. We have to keep in mind the fact that love and action are the only mediums through which perfect knowledge can be obtained, for the object of knowledge is not pedantry but wisdom. The primary object of an institution of this kind should not merely be to educate one's limbs and mind to be in efficient readiness for all emergencies, but to be in perfect tune in the symphony of response between life and world, to find the balance of their harmony which is wisdom. The first important lesson for children in such a place would

be that of improvisation, the constant imposition of the ready-made having been banished therefrom in order to give constant occasions to explore one's capacity through surprises of achievement. I must make it plain that this means a lesson not in simple life, but in creative life. For life may grow complex, and yet if there is a living personality in its centre, it will still have the unity of creation, it will carry its own weight in perfect grace, and will not be a mere addition to the number of facts that only goes to swell a crowd.

I wish I could say that we have fully realized my dream in our school. We have only made the first introduction towards it and have given an opportunity to the children to find their freedom in Nature by being able to love it. For love is freedom; it gives us that fulness of existence which saves us from paying with our soul for objects that are immensely cheap. Love lights up this world with its meaning and makes life feel that it has everywhere that *enough* which truly is its feast. I know men who preach the cult of simple life by glorifying the spiritual merit of poverty. I refuse to imagine any special value in poverty when it is a mere negation. Only when the mind has the sensitiveness to be able to respond to the deeper call of reality is it naturally weaned away from the lure of the fictitious value of things. It is callousness which robs us of our simple power to enjoy and dooms us to the indignity of a snobbish pride in furniture and the foolish burden of expensive things. But to pit the callousness of asceticism against the callousness of luxury is merely fighting one evil with the help of another, inviting the pitiless demon of the desert in place of the indiscriminate demon of the jungle.

I tried my best to develop in the children of my school the freshness of their feeling for Nature, a sensitiveness of soul in their relationship with their human surroundings, with the help of literature, festive ceremonials and also the religious teaching which enjoins us to come to the nearer presence of the world through the soul, thus to gain it more than can be measured—like gaining an instrument, not merely by having it, but by producing music upon it. I prepared for my children a real home-coming into this world. Among other subjects learnt in the open air under the shade of trees they had their music and picture-making; they had their dramatic performances, activities that were the expressions of life.

But as I have already hinted, this was not sufficient and I waited for men and the means to be able to introduce into our school an active vigour of work, the joyous exercise of our inventive and constructive energies that help to build up character and by their constant movements naturally sweep away all accumulations of dirt, decay and death. In other words I always felt the need of the Western

genius for imparting to my educational ideal that strength of reality which knows how to clear the path towards a definite end of practical good.

For me the obstacles were numerous. The tradition of the community which calls itself educated, the parents' expectations, the up-bringing of the teachers themselves, the claim and the constitution of the official University, were all overwhelmingly arrayed against the idea I had cherished. In addition to this, our funds which had all but failed to attract contribution from my countrymen were hardly adequate to support an institution in which the number of boys must necessarily be small.

Fortunately help came to us from an English friend who took the leading part in creating and guiding the rural organization work connected with the Visva-Bharati. He believes, as I do, in an education which takes count of the organic wholeness of human individuality that needs for its health a general stimulation to all its faculties, bodily and mental. In order to have the freedom to give effect to this idea we started our work with a few boys who either were orphans or whose parents were too destitute to be able to send them to any school whatever.

Before long we discovered that minds actively engaged in a round of constructive work fast developed energies which sought eager outlets in the pursuit of knowledge, even in undertaking extra tasks for such a mechanical result as the perfecting of hand-writing. The minds of these boys became so alive to all passing events that a very simple fact made them at once realize the advantage of learning English which was not in their programme. The suggestion came to them one day while posting their letters as they watched the postmaster writing on their envelopes in English the addresses that had already been written in Bengali. Immediately they went to their teacher claiming to be taught English in an additional hour, and what is still more amazing, these brave boys do not yet repent of their rashness in this choice of their lesson. Do I not remember to this day what violently criminal thoughts possessed my infant mind when my own teacher of English made his appearance at the bend of the lane leading to our house ?

For these boys vacation has no meaning. Their studies, though strenuous, are not a task, being permeated by a holiday spirit which takes shape in activities in their kitchen, their vegetable garden, their weaving, their work of small repairs. It is because their class-work has not been wrenched away and walled-in from their normal vacation, because it has been made a part of their daily current of life, that it easily carries itself by its own onward flow.

Most of our boys when they first came were weak in the body and weak in mind; the ravages that malaria and other tropical diseases

had made in them through generations of fatal inheritance had left them like a field devastated by years of savage warfare which had turned the soil into anaemic barrenness. They brought with them an intolerable mental perversity, the outcome of vitiated blood and a starved physical constitution. The Brahmin was supercilious, the non-Brahmin pitiable in his shrinking self-abasement. They hated to do any work of common good lest others besides themselves should get the least advantage. They sulked because they were asked to do for their own benefit the kind of work that according to their idea of fitness, should be done by an ordinary coolie or by a paid cook. They were not ashamed of living upon charity but were ashamed of self-help. Possibly they thought it unjust that we should gain the merit and they should pay at least a part of the cost.

It might have been thought that this meanness and selfish jealousy, this moral lethargy revealed in the utter want of beneficence in them, were inherent in their nature. But within a very short time all these have been changed. The spirit of sacrifice and comradeship, the disinterested desire to help others, which these boys have developed are rare even in children who have had better opportunities. It was the active healthy life which brought out in a remarkably quick time all that was good in them, and the accumulated rubbish of impurities was swept off. The daily work which they were doing brought before them moral problems in the concrete shape of difficulties and claimed solutions from them. The logic of facts showed to them the reality of moral principles in life, and now they feel astonished at instances when other boys do not understand it. They take the utmost delight in cooking, weaving, gardening, improving their surroundings, rendering services to other boys, very often secretly, lest they should feel embarrassed. In ordinary messing organizations members generally clamour for more than is provided to them, but these boys willingly simplify their needs, patiently understand the inevitableness of imperfections. They are made to realize that the responsibility is mostly theirs, and every luxury becomes a burden when a great part of its pressure is not upon other peoples' shoulders. Therefore, instead of idly grumbling at deficiencies they have to think and manage for themselves. To improve their dietary they must put extra zest into their vegetable growing. They have their tools and their mother wit for their small needs, and though their endeavour is sure to have crude results yet these have a value which exceeds all market prices.

I wish, for the sake of giving an artistic touch of disarray to my description, I could speak of some breakdown in our plan, of some unexpected element of misfit trying to wreck the symmetry of our arrangement. But, in the name of truth, I have to confess that it has

not yet happened. Possibly, our tropical climate is accountable for this dull calm in our atmosphere, wherefor that excess of energy may be lacking in our boys which often loves to make a mess of things that are tiresomely pointed out as worthy of protection, like the beautiful peacock pointed out by Indian villagers to the Western lovers of sport. Possibly it is not even yet too late to hope that this newly built experiment of ours is not going to be too tame a copy of a model paradise for harmless boys. I am sure, before long, some incalculable problems of life will make their appearance to challenge our theories and to try our faith in our ideal with rude contradictions.

In the meanwhile, having realized that this daily practice in the adaptation of mind and body to life's necessities has made these boys intellectually alert, we have at last mustered courage to extend this system to the primary section of our school which is furthest away from the military frontier of our University. The children of this section, under an ideal teacher who realizes that to teach is to learn, have just finished constructing their first hut of which they are absurdly proud. I can see from their manner, they have dimly begun to think that education is a permanent part of the adventure of life, that it is not like a painful hospital for curing them of the congenital malady of their ignorance, but is a function of health, the natural expression of their mind's vitality. Thus, I have just had the good fortune to watch the first shoot of life peeping out in a humble corner of our organization. My idea is to allow this climber to grow up, with no special label of learned nomenclature attached to it; grow up till it completely hides the dead pole that bears no natural flower or fruit, but flourishes the parchment flag of examination success.

Before I stop I must say a few more words about a most important item of my educational endeavour.

Children have their active sub-conscious mind which, like the tree, has the power to gather its food from the surrounding atmosphere. For them the atmosphere is a great deal more important than rules and methods, building appliances, class teachings and text-books. The earth has her mass of substance in her land and water. But, if I may be allowed figurative language, she finds her inspiration of freedom, the stimulation of her life, from her atmosphere. It is, as it were, the envelopement of perpetual education. It brings from her depth responses in colour and perfume, music and movement, her incessant self-revelation, continual wonders of the unexpected. In his society man has the diffuse atmosphere of culture always about himself. It has the effect of keeping his mind sensitive to his racial inheritance, to the current of influences that come from tradition; it makes it easy for him unconsciously to imbibe the concentrated wisdom of ages. But



in our educational organizations we behave like miners, digging only for things substantial, through a laborious process of mechanical toil; and not like a tiller of the soil, whose work is in perfect collaboration with nature, in a passive relationship of sympathy with the atmosphere.

However, I tried to create an atmosphere in my institution, giving it the principal place in our programme of teaching. For atmosphere there must be for developing the sensitiveness of soul, for affording mind its true freedom of sympathy. Apathy and ignorance are the worst forms of bondage for man; they are the invisible walls of confinement that we carry round us when we are in their grip. In educational organizations our reasoning faculties have to be nourished in order to allow our mind its freedom in the world of truth, our imagination for the world which belongs to art, and our sympathy for the world of human relationship. This last is even more important than learning the geography of foreign lands.

The minds of children of today are almost deliberately made incapable of understanding other people with different languages and customs. This causes us, when our growing souls demand it, to grope after each other in darkness, to hurt each other in ignorance, to suffer from the worst form of the blindness of this age. The Christian missionaries themselves have contributed to this cultivation of insensitiveness and contempt for alien races and civilizations. In the name of brotherhood and the blindness of sectarian pride they create misunderstanding. This they make permanent in their text-books and poison the susceptible minds of the young. I have tried to save our children from such a mutilation of natural human love with the help of friends from the West, who, with their sympathetic understanding, have done us the greatest service.

**SWAMI VIVEKANANDA**

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## THE UNIVERSAL RELIGION

*T*HROUGH THE VISTAS of the past the voice of the centuries is coming down to us : the voice of the sages of the Himalayas and the recluses of the forest; the voice that came to the Semitic races; the voice that spoke through Buddha and other spiritual giants. This voice is like the little rivulets that come from the mountains. Now they disappear, and now they appear again in stronger flow till finally they unite in one mighty majestic flood. The messages that are coming down to us from the prophets and holy men and women of all sects and nations are joining their forces and speaking to us with the trumpet voice of the past. And the first message it brings us is : 'Peace be unto you and to all religions.' It is not a message of antagonism, but of one united religion.

At the beginning of this century it was almost feared that religion was at an end. Under the tremendous sledge-hammer blows of scientific research old superstitions were crumbling away like masses of porcelain. Those to whom religion meant only a bundle of creeds and meaningless ceremonials were at their wits' end. For a time it seemed inevitable that the surging tide of agnosticism and materialism would sweep all before it. Many thought the case hopeless and the cause of religion lost once and for ever.

But the tide has turned and to the rescue has come--what? The study of comparative religions. By the study of different religions we find that in essence they are one.

The proof of one religion depends on the the proof of all the rest. For instance, if I have six fingers, and no one else has, you may well say that it is abnormal. The same reasoning may be applied to the argument that only one religion is true and others false. One religion only, like one set of six fingers in the world, would be unnatural. We see, therefore, that if one religion is true, all others must be true. There are differences in non-essentials, but in essentials they are all one. If my five fingers are true, they prove that your five fingers are true too.

I find in the study of the various religions of the world that there are three different stages of ideas with regard to the soul and God. In the first place, all religions admit that, apart from the body which perishes, there is a certain part or something which does not change like the body, a part that is immutable, eternal, and never dies. We—the essential part of us—never had a beginning and will never have an end. And above us all, above this eternal nature, there is another eternal Being without end—God. People talk about the beginning of the world, the beginning of man. The word 'beginning' simply means the beginning of the cycle. That which has a beginning must have an end. Wherever the beginning of creation is mentioned, it means the beginning of a cycle. Your body will meet with death, but your soul, never.

Along with this idea of the soul we find another group of ideas in regard to perfection. The soul in itself is perfect. The New Testament admits man perfect at beginning. Man made himself impure by his own actions. But he is to regain his old nature, his pure nature. Some speak of these things in allegories, fables, and symbols. But when we begin to analyse these statements we find that they all teach that the human soul is in its very nature perfect, and that man is to regain that original purity. How? By knowing God.

We find that all religions teach the eternity of the soul, as well as its lustre has been dimmed, but that its primitive purity is to be regained by the knowledge of God. What is the idea of God in these different religions? The primary idea of God was very vague. The most ancient nations had different deities—sun, earth, fire, water. We next find one God standing supreme. But the idea differed according to different tribes. They each asserted that their God was the greatest. And they tried to prove it by fighting. The one that could do the best fighting proved thereby that its God was the greatest. Those races were more or less savage. But gradually better and better ideas took the place of the old ones. All those old ideas are gone or going into the lumber room. All those religions were the outgrowth of centuries; not one fell from the skies. Each had to be worked out bit by bit.

Next came the monotheistic ideas: belief in one God who is omnipotent and omniscient, the one God of the universe. This one God is extra-cosmic; he lives in the heavens. He is invested with the gross conceptions of his originators: he had a right side and a left side, and a bird in his hand, and so on and so forth. But one thing we find, that the tribal gods have disappeared for ever and the one God of the universe has taken their place—the God of gods. Still he is only an extra-cosmic God. He is unapproachable; nothing can come near him. In the New Testament it is taught, 'Our Father who art in

heaven'—God in the heavens separated from men. We are living on earth and he is living in heaven.

Further on we find the teaching that he is a God immanent in nature; he is not only God in heaven, but on earth, too. He is the God in us.

In the Hindu philosophy we find a stage of the same proximity of God to us. But we do not stop there. There is the non-dualistic stage, in which man realizes that the God he has been worshipping is not only the Father in heaven and on earth but that 'I and my Father are one.' He realizes in his soul that he is God himself, only a lower expression of him. All that is real in me is he; all that is real in him is I. The gulf between God and man is thus bridged. Thus we find how by knowing God, we find the kingdom of heaven within us.

In the first, or dualistic, stage, man knows he is a little personal soul—John, James, or Tom—and he says, 'I will be John, James, or Tom to all eternity, and never anything else.' As well might the murderer come along and say, 'I will remain a murderer for ever.' But as time goes on Tom vanishes and goes back to the original pure Adam.

The different stages of growth are absolutely necessary to the attainment of purity and perfection. The varying systems of religion are at bottom founded on the same ideas. Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is within you. Again he says, 'Our Father who art in heaven.' How do you reconcile the two sayings? In this way. He was talking to the uneducated masses when he said the latter, the masses who were uneducated in religion. It was necessary to speak to them in their own language. The masses want concrete ideas, something the senses can grasp. A man may be the greatest philosopher in the world but a child in religion. When a man has developed a high state of spirituality he can understand that the kingdom of heaven is within him.

Thus we see that the apparent contradictions and perplexities in every religion mark but different stages of growth. And as such we have no right to blame anyone for his religion. There are stages of growth in which forms and symbols are necessary; they are the language that the souls in that stage can understand.

The next idea that I want to bring to you is that religion does not consist in doctrines or dogmas. It is not what you read or what dogmas you believe that is of importance, but what you realize. 'Blessed are the pure in spirit, for they shall see God', yea, in this life. And that is salvation. There are those who teach that this can be gained by the mumbling of words. But no great Master ever taught that external forms were necessary for salvation. The power of attaining it is within ourselves. We live and move in God. Creeds and sects have their parts

to play, but they are for children; they last but temporarily. Books never make religions, but religions make books. We must not forget that. No book ever created a soul. We must never forget that. The end of all religions is the realizing of God in the soul. That is the one universal religion.

If there is one universal truth in all religions, I place it here, in realizing God. Ideals and methods may differ, but that is the central point. There may be a thousand different radii, but they all converge to the one centre, and that is the realization of God: something behind this world of sense, this world of eternal eating and drinking and talking nonsense, this world of false shadows and selfishness. There is that beyond all books, beyond all creeds, beyond the vanities of this world, and it is the realization of God within yourself. A man may believe in all the churches in the world, he may carry in his head all the sacred books ever written, he may baptize himself in all the rivers of the earth; still, if he has no perception of God, I would class him with the rankest atheist.

And a man may have never entered a church or a mosque, nor performed any ceremony, but if he feels God within himself and is thereby lifted above the vanities of the world, that man is a holy man, a saint, call him what you will.

As soon as a man stands up and says he is right or his church is right, and all others are wrong, he is himself all wrong. He does not know that upon the proof of all the others depends the proof of his own.

So far as they are not exclusive, I see that the sects and creeds are all mine; they are all grand. They are all helping man towards the one real religion. I will add, it is good to be born in a church, but it is bad to die there. It is good to be born a child, but bad to remain a child. Churches, ceremonies, and symbols are good for children, but when the child is grown, he must burst the church or himself. We must not remain children for ever. It is like trying to fit one coat to all sizes and growths. I do not deprecate the existence of sects in the world. Would to God there were twenty millions more, for the more there are, the greater field there will be for selection. What I do object to is trying to fit one religion to every case. Though all religions are essentially the same, they must have the varieties of form produced by dissimilar circumstances among different nations. We must each have our own individual religion—individual as far as the externals go.

I will tell you a story. A lioness in search of prey came upon a flock of sheep, and as she jumped at one of them she gave birth to a cub and died on the spot. The young lion was brought up in the flock, ate

grass, and bleated like a sheep. It never knew that it was a lion. One day a lion came across this flock and was astonished to see in it a huge lion eating grass and bleating like a sheep. At his sight the flock fled and the lion-sheep with them.

But the lion watched his opportunity and one day found—the lion-sheep asleep. He woke him up and said, 'You are a lion.' The other said, 'No', and began to bleat like a sheep. But the stranger lion took him to a lake and asked him to look in the water at his own image and see if he did not resemble him, the stranger lion. He looked and acknowledged that he did. Then the stranger lion began to roar and asked him to do the same. The lion-sheep tried his voice and was soon roaring as grandly as the other. And he was a sheep no longer.

My friends, I would like to tell you that you are mighty as lions.

If the room is dark, do you go about beating your chest and crying, 'It is dark, dark, dark'? No, the only way to get the light is to strike a light, and then the darkness goes. The only way to realize the light above you is to strike the spiritual light within you, and the darkness of sin and impurity will flee away. Think of your higher Self, not of your lower.



There were times in olden days when prophets were many in every society. The time is to come when prophets will walk through every street in every city in the world. We shall come to understand that the secret of religion is being able not only to think and say all these thoughts, but to realize them, to realize newer and higher ones than have ever been realized, to discover them, to bring them in society; and the study of religion should be the training to make prophets. The schools and colleges should be the training grounds for prophets. Until a man becomes a prophet, religion is a mockery. We must see religion, feel it, realize it, in a thousand times more intense sense than that in which we see the wall.

But there is one principle which underlies all these various manifestations of religion and which has been already mapped out for us. Every science must end where it finds a unity, because we cannot go any farther; when a perfect unity is reached, that science has nothing more of principles to tell us. Take any science—chemistry, for example. Suppose we can find one element out of which we can manufacture all other elements. Then chemistry, as a science, will have become perfect. What will remain for us is to discover every day new combinations of that one material, and the application of those



combinations for all the purposes of life. So with religion. The gigantic principles, the scope, the plan, of religion were already discovered ages ago, when men found the last words, as they are called, in the Vedas, 'I am He'—the truth that there is that One in whom this whole universe of matter and mind finds its unity, whom they call God or Brahman or Allah or Jehovah, or any other name. We cannot go beyond that. The grand principle has been already mapped out for us. Our work lies in filling it in, working it out, applying it to every part of our lives. We have to work now to that everyone will become a prophet.

This, the training of prophets, is the great work that lies before us, and consciously or unconsciously, all the great systems of religion are working towards this one great goal, only with this difference, that in many religions you will find they declare that this direct perception of spirituality is not to be had in this life, that man must die, and after his death there will come a time in another world when he will realize things which now he must believe. But Vedanta will ask all people who make such assertions: 'Then how do you know that spirituality exists?' And they will have to answer that there must have been always certain particular people who, even in this life, got a glimpse of things which are unknown and unknowable.

Even this makes a difficulty. If they were peculiar people, having this power simply by chance, we have no right to believe in them. It would be a sin to believe in anything that is by chance, because we cannot know it. What is meant by knowledge? Destruction of peculiarity. Suppose a boy goes into a street or a menagerie and sees a peculiarly shaped animal. He does not know what it is. Then he goes to a country where there are hundreds like that one, and he is satisfied; he knows what the species is. Our knowledge is knowing the principle. Our non-knowledge is finding the particular without reference to principle. When we find one case or a few cases separate from the principle, without any reference to the principle, we are in darkness and do not know. Now, if these prophets, as they say, were peculiar persons who alone had the right to catch a glimpse of that which is beyond, and no one else has the right, we should not believe in these prophets, because they are peculiar cases without any reference to a principle. We can believe in them only if we ourselves become prophets.

Religion is to be realized now. And for you to become religious means that you will start without any religion, work your way up, and realize things, see things for yourself. When you have done that, then, and then alone, you have religion. Before that you are no better than atheists, or worse, because the atheist is sincere; he stands up and says, 'I do not know about these things', while those others do not know but go about the world saying, 'We are very religious people'.

What religion they have no one knows; they have swallowed some grandmother's story, and priests have asked them to believe these things.

Realization of religion is the only way. Each one of us will have to discover it for himself. Of what use, then, are these books, these Bibles of the world? They are of great use; they are like maps of a country. I had seen maps of England all my life before I went there, and they were great helps to me in forming some sort of conception of England. Yet when I arrived in this country, what a difference between the maps and the country itself! So is the difference between realization and scriptures.

This is the first principle, that realization is religion and he who realizes is the religious man. You will find many persons in this world who will say, 'I wanted to become religious, I wanted to realize these things, but I have not been able, so I do not believe in anything.' Even among the educated you will find these. Large numbers of people will tell you, 'I have tried to be religious all my life, but there is nothing in it.'

Suppose a man is a chemist, a great scientific man. You say to him, 'I do not believe anything about chemistry, because I have all my life tried to become a chemist and have not succeeded.'

He will ask, 'When did you try?'

'When I went to bed I repeated, "Oh, chemistry, come to me", and it never came.'

The chemist will laugh at you and say, 'Oh, that is not the way. Why did you not go to the laboratory and get all the acids and alkalis and burn your hands from time to time?'

Do you take the same trouble with religion? Every science has its own method of learning, and religion is to be learned the same way.



No search has been dearer to the human heart than that which brings us light from God. No study has taken so much of human energy, whether in times past or present, as the study of the soul, of God, and of human destiny. Thus it has been throughout the ages in all countries. Man has wanted to look beyond, wanted to expand himself; and all that we call progress, evolution, has always been measured by that one search—the search for human destiny, the search for God.

As our social struggles are represented, among different nations, by different social organizations, so is man's spiritual struggle

represented by various religions; and as different social organizations are constantly quarrelling, so these spiritual organizations have been constantly at war with one another. Men belonging to a particular social organization claim that the right to live belongs only to them, and so long as they can, they want to exercise that right at the cost of the weak. Similarly, each religious sect has claimed the exclusive right to live. And thus we find that there is nothing that has brought to man more blessings than religion, yet at the same time there is nothing that has brought more horror than religion.

We know that there has always been an opposing under-current of thought; there have been always parties of men, philosophers, students of comparative religion, who have tried and still are trying to bring about harmony in the midst of all these jarring and discordant sects. As regards certain countries, these attempts have succeeded, but as regards the whole world, they have failed.

Now, taking a common-sense view of the thing, we find at the start that there is a tremendous life power in all the great religions of the world. Some may say that they are ignorant of this; but ignorance is no excuse. If a man says, 'I do not know what is going on in the external world, therefore things that are said to be going on in the external world do not exist', that man is inexcusable. Those of you who watch the movement of religious thought all over the world are perfectly aware that not one of the great religions of the world has died; not only so, each one of them is progressing. Christians are multiplying, Mohammedans are multiplying, the Hindus are gaining ground, the Jews also are increasing, and by their spreading all over the world, and increasing rapidly, the fold of Judaism is constantly expanding. The Buddhists are spreading over Central Asia all the time.

This, then, is a fact in the present history of the human race, that all these great religions exist and are spreading and multiplying. Now there is a meaning, certainly, to this; and had it been the will of an all-wise and all-merciful Creator that one of these religions should alone exist and the rest should die, it would have become a fact long, long ago. If it were a fact that only one of these religions were true and all the rest false, by this time it would have covered the whole world. But this is not so; not one has gained all the ground. All religions sometimes advance, sometimes decline.

Sects are multiplying all the time. If the claims of a religion, that it has all the truth, and that God has given it all this truth in a certain book, were true, why are there so many sects? Fifty years do not pass before there are twenty sects founded upon the same book. Take the Bible, for instance, and all the sects that exist among Christians; each

one puts its own interpretation upon the same text, and each says that it alone understands that text and all the rest are wrong. So with every religion. There are many sects among the Mohammedans and among the Buddhists, and hundreds among the Hindus.

Now, I place these facts before you in order to show you that any attempt to bring all humanity to one method of thinking in spiritual things has been a failure and always will be a failure. Every man that starts a theory, even at the present day, finds that if he goes twenty miles away from his followers they will make twenty sects. You see that happening all the time. You cannot make all conform to the same idea; that is a fact, and I thank God that it is so. I am not against any sect I am glad that sects exist; and I only wish they may go on multiplying more and more. Why? Simply because of this: if you and I were to think exactly the same thoughts, there would be no thoughts for us to think. We know that two or more forces must come into collision in order to produce motion. It is the clash of thought, the differentiation of thought, that awakes thought. Now if we all thought alike, we would be like Egyptian mummies in a museum, looking vacantly at one another's faces--no more than that! Whirls and eddies occur only in a rushing, living stream. There are no whirlpools in stagnant, dead water. When religions are dead, there will be no more sects; it will be the perfect peace and harmony of the grave. But so long as mankind thinks, there will be sects. Variation is the sign of life.

Then arises the question: how can all this variety be true? If one thing is true, its negation is false. How can contradictory opinions be true at the same time? This is the question which I intend to answer. But I shall first ask you: are all the religions of the world really contradictory? I do not mean the external forms in which great thoughts are clad. I do not mean the different buildings, languages, rituals, books, and so forth, employed in various religions; but I mean the internal soul of every religion. Every religion has a soul behind it, and that soul may differ from the soul of another religion: but are they contradictory? Do they contradict or supplement each other—that is the question.

I believe that they are not contradictory; they are supplementary. Each religion, as it were, takes up one part of the great universal truth and spends its whole force in embodying and typifying that part of the great truth. It is, therefore addition, not exclusion. That is the idea. System after system arises, each one embodying a great idea, and ideals must be added to ideals. And this is the march of humanity. Man never progresses from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lesser truth to higher truth—but it is never from error to truth.

Then again, we know that there may be almost contradictory points of view, but they will all indicate the same thing. Suppose a man is journeying towards the sun and as he advances he takes a photograph of the sun at every stage. When he comes back he has many photographs of the sun, which he places before us. We see that no two are alike, and yet who will deny that all these are photographs of the same sun, from different standpoints? In the same way, we are all looking at truth from different standpoints, which vary according to our birth, education, surroundings, and so on. We are viewing truth, getting as much of it as these circumstances will permit; colouring the truth with our own feelings, understanding with our own intellect, and grasping it with our own mind. We can only know as much of truth as is related to us, as much of it as we are able to receive. This makes the difference between man and man and occasions, sometimes, even contradictory ideas; yet we all belong to the same great universal truth.

My idea, therefore, is that all these religions are different forces in the economy of God, working for the good of mankind; and that not one can become dead, not one can be killed. And that universal religion about which philosophers and others have dreamed in every country already exists. It is here. If the priests and other people who have taken upon themselves the task of preaching different religions simply cease preaching for a few moments, we shall see it is there. They are disturbing it all the time, because it is to their interest.

You see that priests in every country are very conservative. Why is it so? There are very few priests who lead the people; most of them are led by the people and are their slaves and servants. If you say something is dry, they say it is so; if you say it is black, they say it is black. If the people advance, the priests advance. They cannot lag behind. So before blaming the priests—it is the fashion to blame the priest—you ought to blame yourselves. You get only what you deserve.

There are various grades and types of human minds, and what a task religions take upon themselves! A man brings forth two or three doctrines and claims that his religion ought to satisfy all humanity. He goes out into the world, God's menagerie, with a little cage in hand, and says: 'God and the elephant and everybody have to go into this. Even if we have to cut the elephant into pieces, he must go in'.

Think of little sects, born out of fallible human brains, making this arrogant claim of knowing the whole of God's infinite truth! Think of the arrogance of it! If it shows anything, it shows how vain human beings are. And it is no wonder that such claims have always failed, and by the mercy of the Lord are always destined to fail.

We are such babes ! We always forget human nature. When we begin life we think that our fate will be something extraordinary, and nothing can make us disbelieve that. But when we grow old we think differently. So with religions. In their early stages, when they spread a little, they get the idea that they can change the minds of the whole human race in a few years, and go on killing and massacring to make converts by force. Then they fail and begin to understand better. We see that these sects did not succeed in what they started out to do, which was a great blessing. Just think if one of those fanatical sects had succeeded all over the world, where should man be today? Now the Lord be blessed that they did not succeed! Yet each one represents a great truth; each religion represents a particular excellence -- something which is its soul.

There is an old story which comes to my mind. There were some ogresses who used to kill people and do all sorts of mischief; but they themselves could not be killed, until someone found out that their souls were in certain birds, and so long as the birds were safe, nothing could destroy the ogresses. So each one of us has, as it were, such a bird, where his soul is — has an ideal, a mission to perform in life. Every human being is an embodiment of such an ideal, such a mission. Whatever else you may lose, so long as that ideal is not lost and that mission is not hurt, nothing can kill you. Wealth may come and go, misfortunes may pile mountain high, but if you have kept the ideal entire, nothing can kill you. You may have grown old, even a hundred years old, but if that mission is fresh and young in your heart, what can kill you? But when that ideal is lost and that mission is hurt, nothing can save you. All the wealth, all the power of the world, will not save you.

And what are nations but multiplied individuals? So each nation has a mission of its own to perform in this harmony of races, and so long as that nation keeps to that ideal, that nation nothing can kill; but if that nation gives up its mission and goes after something else, its life becomes short and it vanishes.

And so with religions. The fact that all these old religions are living today proves that they must have kept that mission intact. In spite of all their mistakes, in spite of all difficulties, in spite of all quarrels, in spite of all the incrustations of forms, the heart of every one of them is sound—is a throbbing, beating, loving heart. They have not lost, any one of them, the great mission they came for. And it is splendid to study that mission.

With the Hindus you will find one national idea—spirituality. In no other religion, in no other sacred books of the world, will you find so much energy spent in defining the idea of God. They tried to define

the idea of soul so that no earthly touch might mar it. Spirit must be seen as divine and must not be identified with the physical man. This same idea of unity, of realization of God, the omnipresent, is preached throughout. They think it is all nonsense to say that God lives in heaven, and all that. It is a mere human, anthropomorphic idea. All the heaven that ever existed is now and here. One moment in infinite time is quite as good as any other moment. If you believe in a God, you can see him even now. We think religion begins when you have realized something. It is not believing in doctrines or giving intellectual assent or making declarations. If there is a God, have you seen him? If you say no, then what right have you to believe in him? If you are in doubt whether there is a God, why do you not struggle to see him? Why do you not renounce the world and spend the whole of your life for this one object? Renunciation and spirituality are the two great ideas of India, and it is because India clings to these ideas that all her mistakes count for so little.

With the Christians, the central idea that has been preached by them is: Watch and pray, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand — which means: Purify your minds and be ready. And that spirit never dies. You recollect that the Christians, even in the darkest days, even in the most superstitious Christian countries, have always tried to prepare themselves for the coming of the Lord by trying to help others, building hospitals, and so on. So long as the Christians keep to that ideal, their religion lives.

Now an ideal presents itself to my mind. It may be only a dream. I do not know whether it will ever be realized in this world; but sometimes it is better to dream a dream than die on hard facts. Great truths, even in a dream, are good, better than bad facts. So let us dream a dream.

You know that there are various grades of mind. You may be a matter-of-fact, common-sense rationalist; you do not care for forms and ceremonies; you want intellectual, hard, ringing facts, and they alone will satisfy you. Then there are the Puritans and the Mohammedans, who will not allow a picture or a statue in their place of worship. Very well. But there is another man who is more artistic. He wants a great deal of art — beauty of lines and curves, colours, flowers, forms; he wants candles, lights, and all the insignia and paraphernalia of ritual, that he may see God. His mind grasps God in those forms, as yours grasps Him through the intellect. Then there is the devotional man, whose soul is crying for God; he has no other idea but to worship God and to praise Him. Then again, there is the philosopher, standing outside all these, mocking at them. He thinks: 'What nonsense they are! What ideas about God!'

They may laugh at one another, but each one has a place in this world. All these various minds, all these various types, are necessary. If there is ever going to be an ideal religion, it must be broad and large enough to supply food for all these minds. It must supply the strength of philosophy to the philosopher, the devotee's heart to the worshipper; to the ritualist it must give all that the most marvellous symbolism can convey; to the poet, it must give as much of heart as he can take in, and other things besides. To make such a broad religion, we shall have to go back to the beginnings of the religions and take them all in.

Our watchword, then, will be acceptance and not exclusion. Not only toleration, for so-called toleration is often blasphemy, and I do not believe in it. I believe in acceptance. Why should I tolerate? Toleration that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing you to live.

Is it not a blasphemy to think that you and I are allowing others to live? I accept all religions that were in the past and worship with them all. I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhist temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the heart of everyone.

Not only shall I do all this, but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future. Is God's book finished? Or is it still a continuous revelation, going on? It is a marvellous book--those spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. I would leave it open for all of them. We stand in the resent, but open ourselves to the infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present, and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present, and to all that are to come in the future!



In every religion there are three parts. First there is the philosophy, which presents the whole scope of that religion, setting forth its basic principles, the goal, and the means for reaching it. The second part is mythology, which is philosophy made concrete. It consists of legends relating to the lives of men or of supernatural beings, and so forth. It



is the abstractions of philosophy concretized in the more or less imaginary lives of men and supernatural beings. The third part is ritual. This is still more concrete and is made up of forms and ceremonies, various physical attitudes, flowers and incense, and many other things that appeal to the senses. You will find that all recognized religions have these three elements. Some lay more stress on one, some on another.

Let us now take into consideration the first part, philosophy. Is there one universal philosophy? Not yet. Each religion brings out its own doctrines and insists upon them as being the only true ones. And not only does it do that, but it thinks that he who does not believe in them must go to some horrible place. Some will even draw the sword to compel others to believe as they do. This is not through wickedness, but through a particular disease of the human brain called fanaticism. They are very sincere, these fanatics, the most sincere of human beings; but they are quite as irresponsible as other lunatics in the world. This disease of fanaticism is one of the most dangerous of all diseases. All the wickedness of human nature is roused by it. Anger is stirred up, nerves are strung high, and human beings become like tigers.

Is there any mythological similarity, is there any mythological harmony, and universal mythology accepted by all religions? Certainly not. All religions have their own mythology; only each one of them says, 'My stories are not mere myths.' Let us try to understand the question by illustration. (I simply mean to illustrate, I do not mean criticism of any religion.) The Christian believes that God took the shape of a dove and came down to earth; to him this is history, and not mythology. The Hindu believes that God is manifested in the cow. Christians say that to believe so is mere mythology, and not history, that it is superstition. The Jews think that if an image is made in the form of a box or a chest, with an angel on either side, then it may be placed in the holy of holies; it is sacred to Jehovah. But if the image is made in the form of a beautiful man or woman, they say, "This is a horrible idol; break it down!"

This is our unity in mythology! If a man stands up and says, 'My prophet did such and such a wonderful thing', others will say, 'That is only superstition.' But at the same time they say that their own prophet did still more wonderful things, which they hold to be historical. No-body in the world, as far as I have seen, is able to make out the fine distinction between history and mythology, as it exists in the brains of these persons. All such stories, to whatever religion they may belong, are really mythological, mixed up occasionally, it may be, with a little history.

Next come the rituals. One sect has one particular form of ritual, and thinks that that is holy, while the rituals of another sect are simply arrant superstition. If one sect worships a peculiar sort of symbol, another sect says, 'Oh, it is horrible.' Where, then, is any universality? How is it possible, then, to have a universal form of religion? That, however, already exists. And let us see what it is.

We all hear about universal brotherhood, and how societies stand up especially to preach this. I remember an old story. In India taking wine is considered very bad. There were two brothers who wished, one night, to drink wine secretly; and their uncle, who was a very orthodox man, was sleeping in a room quite close to theirs. So before they began to drink they said to each other, 'We must be very silent, or Uncle will wake up.' When they were drinking they continued repeating to each other, 'Silence! uncle will wake up', each trying to shout the other down. And as the shouting increased the uncle woke up, came into the room, and discovered the whole thing.

Now we all shout like these drunken men, 'Universal brotherhood! We are all equal, therefore let us make a sect.' As soon as you make a sect you protest against equality, and equality is no more. Mohammedans talk of universal brotherhood, but what comes out of that talk in reality? Why, that anybody who is not a Mohammedan will not be admitted into the brotherhood. Christians talk of universal brotherhood; but anyone who is not a Christian must go to that place where he will be eternally barbecued.

So far we see that it is hard to find any universal features in regard to religion; and yet we know that they exist. We are all human beings, but are we all equal? Certainly not. Who says we are equal? Only the lunatic. Are we all equal in our brains, in our powers, in our bodies? One man is stronger than another; one man has more brain-power than another. If we are all equal, why is there this inequality? Who made it? We. Because we have more or less powers, more or less brains, more or less physical strength, these must make a difference between us.

Yet we know that the doctrine of equality makes an appeal to our heart. We are all human beings; but some are men, and some are women. Here is a black man, there is a white man; but all are men, all belong to one humanity. Various are our faces; I see no two alike; yet we are all human beings. Where is this one humanity? I find a man or a woman, either dark or fair; and among all these faces, I know that there is an abstract humanity to grasp it, to sense it, and to actualise it, yet I know for certain that it is there. If I am sure of anything, it is of this humanity which is common to us all. It is through this generalized entity that I see you as a man or a woman.

So it is with this universal religion, which runs through all the various religions of the world in the form of God; it must and does exist through eternity. 'I am the thread that runs through all these pearls,' and each pearl is a religion or even a sect thereof. Such are the different pearls', and the Lord is the thread that runs through all of them; only the majority of mankind are entirely unconscious of it.

Unity in variety is the plan of the universe. As a man you are separate from an animal, but as living beings man, woman, animal, and plant are all one; and as existence you are one with the whole universe. That universal existence is God, the ultimate Unity in the universe. In Him we are all one. At the same time, in manifestation these differences must always remain.

What, then, do I mean by the ideal of a universal religion? I do not mean any one universal philosophy, or any one universal mythology, or universal ritual, held alike by all; for I know that this world must go on working, wheel within wheel, this intricate mass of machinery, most complex, most wonderful. What can we do then? We can make it run smoothly, we can lessen the friction, we can grease the wheels, as it were. How? By recognizing the natural necessity of variation. Just as we have recognized unity by our very nature, so we must also recognize variation. We must learn that truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways, and that each of these ways is true as far as it goes. We must learn that the same thing can be viewed from a hundred different standpoints and yet be the same thing.

Suppose we all go with vessels in our hands to fetch water from a lake. One has a cup, another a jar, another a bucket, and so forth; and we all fill our vessels. The water in each case naturally takes the form of the vessel carried by each of us. He who brought the cup has the water in the form of a cup; he who brought the jar has water in the shape of a jar. But in every case water, and nothing but water, is in the vessel.

So it is in the case of religion. Our minds are like these vessels, and each one of us is trying to arrive at the realization of God. God is like that water filling these different vessels, and in each vessel the vision of God comes in the form of the vessel. Yet He is one. He is God in every case.



So far it is all right theoretically, but is there any way of practically working out this harmony of religions? We find that this recognition that all the various views of religion are true is very, very old.

Hundreds of attempts have been made in India, in Alexandria, in Europe, in China, in Japan, in Tibet, and lastly in America, to formulate a harmonious religious creed, to make all religions come together in love. They have all failed, because they did not adopt any practical plan. That plan alone is practical which does not destroy the individuality of any man in religion, and at the same time shows him a point of union with all others. But so far all the plans of religious harmony that have been tried, while proposing to take in all the various views of religion have, in practice, tried to bind them all down to a few doctrines, and so have produced more new sects, fighting, struggling, and pushing against each other.

I also have my little plan. I do not know whether it will work or not; and I want to present it to you for discussion. What is my plan? In the first place, I would ask mankind to recognize this maxim: 'Do not destroy.' Iconoclastic reformers do no good to the world. Break not, pull not anything down, but build. Help, if you can; if you cannot, fold your hands and stand by and see things go on. Do not injure if you cannot render help. Say not a word against any man's convictions so far as they are sincere. Secondly, take man where he stands, and from there give him a lift. If it be true that God is the centre of all religions, and that each of us is moving towards Him along one of these radii, then it is certain that all of us must reach that centre. And at the centre, where all the radii meet, all our differences will cease.

In society we see so many different natures. There are thousands and thousands of varieties of minds and inclinations. A thorough generalization of them is impossible, but for our practical purpose it is sufficient to have them characterized into four classes. First, there is the active man, the worker; he wants work, and there is tremendous energy in his muscles and nerves. His aim is to work—to build hospitals, do charitable deeds, make streets, plan, and to organize. Then there is the emotional man, who loves the sublime and the beautiful to an excessive degree. He loves to think of the beautiful, to enjoy the aesthetic side of nature, and to adore love and the God of love. He loves with his whole heart the great souls of all times, the prophets of religions. Then there is the mystic, whose mind wants to analyse its own self, to understand the workings of the human mind, what the forces are that are working inside, and how to know, manipulate, and obtain control over them. This is the mystical mind. Then there is the philosopher who wants to weigh everything and use his intellect even beyond the possibilities of all human philosophy.

Now, a religion, to satisfy the largest portion of mankind, must be able to supply food for all these various types of minds; and where this capability is wanting, the existing sects all become one-sided. Suppose

you go to a sect which preaches love and emotion. They sing and weep and preach love. But as soon as you say, 'My friend, that is all right, but I want something stronger than this; a little reason and philosophy; I want to understand things step by step and more rationally', 'Get out', they say. The result is that that sect can only help people of an emotional turn of mind. They not only do not help others, but try to destroy them. And the most wicked part of the whole thing is that they will not only *not* help others, but do not believe in their sincerity.

Again, there are philosophers who talk of the wisdom of India and the East and use big psychological terms, fifty syllables long; but if an ordinary man like me goes to them and says, 'Can you tell me anything to make me spiritual?' the first thing they will do will be to smile and say, 'Oh, you are too far below us in your reason. What can you understand about spirituality?' These are high-up philosophers. They simply show you the door.

Then there are the mystical sects who speak all sorts of things about different planes of existence, different states of mind, and what the power of the mind can do, and so on. If you are an ordinary man and say, 'Show me something good that I can do; I am not much given to speculation; can you give me anything that will suit me?' they will smile, and say, 'Listen to that fool; he knows nothing, his existence is for nothing.' And this is going on everywhere in the world.

What I want to propagate is a religion that will be equally acceptable to all minds; it must be equally philosophic, equally emotional, equally mystic, and equally conducive to action. And this combination will be the ideal, the nearest approach to a universal religion. Would to God that all men were so constituted that in their minds all these elements were equally present in full! That is the ideal, my ideal of a perfect man. Everyone who has only one or two of these elements of character I consider one-sided; and this world is almost full of such one-sided men with knowledge of that one road only in which they move; and everything else is dangerous and horrible to them. To become harmoniously balanced in all these four directions, is my ideal of religion.

And this religion is attained by what we in India call *yoga*—union. To the worker it is union between men and the whole of humanity; to the mystic, between his lower and higher Self; to the lover, union between himself and the God of love; and to the philosopher, it is the union of all existence. This is what is meant by *yoga*. This is a Sanskrit term, and these four divisions of *yoga* have, in Sanskrit, different names. The man who seeks after this kind of union is called a *yogi*. The worker is called a *karma yogi*. He who seeks the union through

love is called *bhakti yogi*. He who seeks it through mysticism is called the *raja yogi*. And he who seeks it through philosophy is called the *jnana yogi*. So this word *yogi* comprises them all.

We find in all beings three sorts of instruments of knowledge. The first is instinct which you find most highly developed in animals; this is the lowest instrument of knowledge. What is the second instrument of knowledge? Reasoning. You find that most highly developed in man. Now in the first place, instinct is an inadequate instrument; to animals the sphere of action is very limited, and within that limit instinct acts. When you come to man, you see it is largely developed into reason. The sphere of action also has here become enlarged. Yet even reason is still insufficient. Reason can go only a little way and then it stops, it cannot go any farther; and if you try to push it, the result is helpless confusion; reason itself becomes unreasonable. Logic becomes argument in a circle. Take for instance the very basis of our perception—matter and force. What is matter? That which is acted upon by force. And force? That which acts upon matter. You see the complication, what the logicians call a seesaw, one idea depending on the other, and this again depending on that. You find a mighty barrier before reason, beyond which reasoning cannot go. Yet it always feels impatient to get into the region of the Infinite beyond. This world, this universe which our senses feel or our mind thinks, is but one atom, so to say, of the Infinite, projected on to the plane of consciousness. Within that narrow limit defined by the network of consciousness works our reason, and not beyond. Therefore, there must be some other instrument to take us beyond, and that instrument is called inspiration.

So instinct, reason, and inspiration are the three instruments of knowledge. Instinct belongs to animals, reason to man, and inspiration to God-men. But in all human beings are to be found in more or less developed condition the germs of all these three instruments of knowledge. To have these mental instruments evolved, the germs must be there. And this must also be remembered, that one instrument is a development of another and therefore, does not contradict it. It is reason that develops into inspiration, and therefore inspiration does not contradict reason, but fulfils it. Things which reason cannot get at are brought to light by inspiration, and they do not contradict reason. The old man does not contradict the child, but fulfils the child.

Therefore you must always bear in mind that the great danger lies in mistaking the lower form of instrument to be the higher. Many times instinct is presented before the world as inspiration, and then come all the spurious claims to the gift of prophecy. A fool or a semi-lunatic thinks that the confusion going on in his brain is inspiration, and he wants men to follow him. The most contradictory, irrational

nonsense that has been preached in the world is simply the instinctive jargon of confused lunatic brains trying to pass for the language of inspiration.

The first test of true teaching must be that the teaching should *not contradict reason*. And you may see that such is the basis of all these *yogas*. We take the *raja yoga*, the psychological *yoga*, the psychological way to union. It is a vast subject, and I can only point out to you now the contral idea of this *yoga*. We have but one method of acquiring knowledge. From the lowest man to the highest *yogi*, all have to use the same method; and that method is what is called concentration. The chemist who works in his laboratory concentrates all the powers of his mind, brings them into one focus, and throws them on the elements; and the elements stand analysed, and thus his knowledge comes. The astronomer also concentrates the powers of his mind, and brings them into one focus; and he throws them on the objects through his telescope; and stars and systems roll forward and give up their secrets to him. So it is in every case—with the professor in his chair, the student with his book, with every man who is working to know. Even the lowest shoeblack, if he gives more concentration, will black shoes better; the cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better. In making money or in worshipping God or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of nature and lets out floods of light. This, the power of concentration, is the only key to the treasure house of knowledge.

The system of *raja yoga* deals almost exclusively with concentration. In the present state of our body we are so much distracted, and the mind is frittering away its energies upon a hundred sorts of things. As soon as I try to calm my thoughts and concentrate my mind upon any one object of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses rush into the brain, thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb it. How to check them and bring the mind under control is the whole subject to study in *raja yoga*.

Now take *karma yoga*, the attainment of God through work. It is evident that in society there are many persons who seem to be born for some sort of activity or other, whose minds cannot be concentrated on the plane of thought alone, and who can function best through work, visible and tangible. There must be a science for this kind of life too. Each one of us is engaged in some work, but the majority of us fritter away the greater portion of our energies because we do not know the secret of work. *Karma yoga* explains this secret and teaches where and how to work, how to employ to the greatest advantage the largest part of our energies in the work that is before us.

But with this secret we must take into consideration the great objection against work—namely, that it causes pain. All misery and pain come from attachment. I want to do work, I want to do good to a human being; and it is ninety to one that that human being whom I have helped will prove ungrateful and go against me. And the result to me is pain. Such things deter mankind from working; and it spoils a good portion of the work and energy of mankind, this fear or pain and misery. *Karma yoga* teaches us how to work for work's sake, unattached, without caring who is helped and what for. The *Karma yogi* works because it is his nature, because he feels that it is good for him to do so; and he has no object beyond that. His position in this world is that of a giver, and he never cares to receive anything. He knows that he is giving, and does not ask for anything in return and therefore he eludes the grasp of misery. Pain, whenever it comes, is the result of attachment.

Then there is *bhakti yoga* for the man of emotional nature, the lover. He wants to love God; he relies upon and uses all sorts of rituals, flowers, incense, beautiful buildings, forms, and all such things. Do not decry these rituals and mythologies. Let people have them; let those who so desire have them. Do not exhibit that unworthy derisive smile and say, 'They are fools; let them have it.' Not so. The greatest men I have seen in my life, the most wonderfully developed in spirituality, have all come through the discipline of these rituals. *Bhakti yoga* teaches them how to love without any ulterior motives, loving God and loving the good because it is good to do so, not for going to heaven, or to get children, wealth, or anything else. It teaches them that love itself is the highest recompense of love—that God himself is love. It teaches them to pay all kinds of tribute to God as the Creator, the omnipresent, omniscient, almighty Ruler, the Father and the Mother.

We lastly come to the *jñana yogi*, the philosopher, the thinker, he who wants to go beyond the visible. He is the man who is not satisfied with the little things of this world. His idea is to go beyond the daily routine of eating, drinking and so on. Not even the teachings of thousands of books will satisfy him. Not even all the sciences will satisfy him; at best they only bring this little world before him. What else will give him satisfaction? Not even myriads of systems of worlds will satisfy him; they are to him but a drop in the ocean of existence. His soul wants to go beyond all that into the very heart of Being, by seeing Reality as it is—by realizing it, by being it, by becoming one with that universal Being, That is the philosopher. To say, that God is the Father or the Mother, the Creator of this universe, its protector and guide, is to him quite inadequate to express him. To him, God is the life of his life, the soul of his soul. God is his own Self. Nothing else remains



which is other than God. All the mortal parts of him become pounded by the weighty strokes of philosophy and are brushed away. What at last truly remains is God himself.

Upon the same tree there are two birds, one on the top, the other below. The one on the top is calm, silent, and majestic, immersed in his own glory; the one on the lower branches, eating sweet and bitter fruits by turns, hopping from branch to branch, becomes happy and miserable by turns. After a time the lower bird eats an exceptionally bitter fruit and gets disgusted. He looks up and sees the other bird, that wondrous one of golden plumage, who eats neither sweet nor bitter fruit, who is neither happy nor miserable, but is calm, Self-centred, and sees nothing beyond the Self. The lower bird longs for this condition, but soon forgets it and again begins to eat the fruit. In a little while he eats another exceptionally bitter fruit, which makes him feel miserable, and he again looks up and tries to get nearer to the upper bird. Once more he forgets, and after a time he looks up and so on he goes again and again, until he comes very near the beautiful bird and sees the reflection of light from his plumage playing around his own body, and he feels a change and seems to melt away. Still nearer he comes, and everything about him melts away, and at last he understands this wonderful change. The lower bird was, as it were, only the substantial-looking shadow, the reflection of the higher; he himself was in essence the upper bird all the time.

It is imperative that all these various *yogas* should be carried out in practice. Mere theories about them will not do any good. First we have to hear about them; then we have to think about them. We have to reason the thoughts out, impress them on our minds, and meditate whole life. No longer will religion remain a bundle of ideas or theories, or an intellectual assent; it will enter into our very self. By means of intellectual assent we may today subscribe to many foolish things, and change our minds altogether tomorrow. But true religion never changes.

Religion is realization; not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories, however, beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging. It is the whole soul's becoming changed into what it believes. That is religion.



**MAHATMA GANDHI**

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## THE HIMALAYAS

ALTHOUGH BOTH SIMLA and Darjeeling are in the Himalayas, in neither of these places could I get an idea of their grandeur. I stayed' in these places only for a short while and they looked like British colonies to me. It was in Almora that I got some idea of what the Himalayas are. But for the Himalayas, there would be no Ganga, Jamuna, Brahmaputra and Indus; if the Himalayas were not there, there would be no rainfall and these rivers would not be there, and without rainfall India would become a desert like the Sahara. Our far-sighted ancestors who knew this and who were always grateful to God for the gifts that were bestowed on them turned the Himalayas into a place of pilgrimage. Thousands of Hindus have sacrificed their lives in these parts in their search for God. These persons were not insane. It is as a result of their *tapas* that the Hindu faith and India herself still endure.

In Kausani, while looking at the row of snow-capped Himalayan heights glittering in the sunlight, I wondered how different types of people would react to the sight of these grand white peaks. Let me unburden my mind by sharing with the reader the thoughts that overpowered me again and again at that time.

If children were to see that sight, they would say to themselves that that was a mountain made of *sutarfeni*<sup>1</sup>, that they would like to run up to it and, sitting on top of it, go on eating that sweet. Anyone who is as crazy about the spinning-wheel as I am would say that someone has peeled the cotton pod, separated the seed from the cotton, carded the latter and made a mountain of cotton like an inexhaustible stock of silk and remark, 'How stupid the people of this country were, that despite this wealth of cotton, they roamed about half-naked and half-starved!' If a devout Parsi happened to come across this sight, he would bow down to the Sun-God and say: 'Look at these mountains

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<sup>1</sup>A sweet resembling white thread

which resemble our *dasturs*<sup>1</sup> clad in milk-white puggrees just taken out of boxes and in gowns which are equally clean and freshly-laundered and ironed, who look handsome as they stand motionless and still with folded hands, engrossed in having the *darshan*<sup>2</sup> of the sun.' A devout Hindu, looking at these glittering peaks which collect upon themselves water from distant dense clouds would say: 'This is God Siva Himself, the Ocean of compassion, and who by holding the waters of the Ganga within His own white matted hair saves India from a deluge.'

Shankaracharya<sup>3</sup> had roamed about in Almora. Even today I can hear him say : 'This is indeed a marvellous sight, but all this is an illusion created by God. The Himalayas do not really exist, I do not exist and you do not exist. Brahman alone is real. It alone is the truth, while the world is illusory. Repeat, therefore, that while Brahman is the only reality, the world is unreal.'

Oh, reader! The true Himalayas exist within our hearts. True pilgrimage, or supreme effort on the part of all human beings, consists in taking shelter in that cave and having *darshan* of Siva there.

CWMG Vol. 41 : Pp. 183-84

## KANYAKUMARI

India's frontiers extend from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Karachi to Assam. These are the four corners of India. The summit of Hindukush is her crest, the strength and beauty of Mother India. At the base, the pure waters of the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal wash her feet. Kanyakumari is no other than Parvati<sup>4</sup> who practiced penance in order to be united in marriage with Siva, the Lord Supreme transcending all worldly attachments. We see the ocean on all three sides of Kanyakumari as it is on the tip of India. Since there is a confluence of two waters, two tints are visible here. As we face the south, we can see from the very same spot the sun rise to our left and set to our right. We did not have the time to witness that spectacle;

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<sup>1</sup>Priests

<sup>2</sup>Sight of a holy person or thing

<sup>3</sup>Eighth-century philosopher

<sup>4</sup>Siva's consort

nevertheless, we could imagine the sun rising at dawn after a bath in the great Bay of Bengal, robbing the stars of their brightness, and, in the evening, going down the golden sky and retiring for rest into the western ocean full of gems. The watchman of the State guest-house there tried his best to persuade us to stay on to see the majestic sunset, but how could we, who were astride a horse, or rather a car, stay on to enjoy such bliss? I had to be content with having my feet purified in the waves of the ocean sanctified through washing the feet of Mother India

What a magnificent structure the *rishis* have raised! What a sense of beauty the *Puranis* had! Here on the tip of India, which is the end of our world, the *rishis* built the temple of Kanyakumari and the authors of Puranas beautified it with pictures. I had no desire to enjoy the beauty of nature, although it fills the place to overflowing. For my part, I drank in here the nectar of the mystery of religion. When I was still dipping my feet in the ocean on the beautiful ghat there, one of my companions said to me: "Vivekananda used to go and meditate on the hill over there." Whether he in fact did so or not, he could have done it. A good swimmer could swim to that spot. There could not but be perfect peace on that island promontory. The music of the ocean-waves, sweet and gentle like strains from a  *vina* ,<sup>1</sup> could only invite one to meditation. Hence my religious yearning grew stronger. Adjoining the steps in a raised platform on which a hundred persons could sit with ease, I felt like sitting down there and reciting the *Gita*. Finally, however, I suppressed even that sacred desire and sat in silence, my heart filled with the image of the teacher of the *Gita*.

Having thus sanctified ourselves, we went to the temple. As I am a crusader for the abolition of untouchability and call myself a *Bhangi*, there was some doubt whether I could enter the temple. I told the man in-charge of the temple not to take me anywhere where he felt that I had no right to go. I would respect those restrictions. He said that the Goddess's *darshan* could be had only after half-past five and that we had come at four o' clock. However, he would show us everything else. The restriction imposed on us was only with respect to approaching the sanctuary where the Goddess is installed. That, however, applied to all who had been abroad. I replied that I would gladly abide by it. After this conversation, the man in-charge led me within and took me round the place.

I did not pity the ignorance of the idolatrous Hindu, but, on the contrary, realized his wisdom. By discovering the way of image-worship, he has not multiplied the one God into many, but realized the fact

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<sup>1</sup>Indian string instrument

and shown it to the world that man can worship—and he will continue to worship—God in His diverse forms. Although the Christians and the Muslims do not regard themselves as idolators, nevertheless, those who worship their ideals are also image-worshippers. A mosque or a church also involved a form of image-worship. Imagining that one can become more holy only by going to these places is a form of idol-worship, and there is no harm in such belief. Even the faith that God is revealed only in the Koran or the Bible is idol-worship and an innocent one. The Hindu goes further and says that everyone should worship God in the form he likes. Even a person who makes an idol of stone or gold or silver and after attributing divinity to it, purifies himself by meditating on it, will be fully qualified to attain *moksha*. While circumambulating the temple, all this became clearer to me.

However, even there my happiness was not untainted by sorrow. I was allowed to make a complete circle, but I was not permitted to go to the inner shrine because I had been to England. The restriction imposed on untouchables, however, was due to the fact of their birth. How can this be tolerated? Could Kanyakumari be polluted? Has this practice been followed since ancient times? My inner voice cried out that this could not be. Moreover, if it had been, it would be sinful. That which is sinful does not cease to be so or become meritorious through its antiquity. Hence, I was all the more convinced that it was the duty of every Hindu to make a mighty effort to remove this stigma.

CWMG Vol. 26; Pp. 424-26

## INDIAN CIVILIZATION

I believe that the civilization India has evolved is not to be beaten in the world. Nothing can equal the seeds sown by our ancestors. Rome went, Greece shared the same fate; the might of the Pharaohs was broken; Japan has become Westernized; of China nothing can be said; but India is still, somehow or other, sound at the foundation. The people of Europe learn their lessons from the writings of the men of Greece or Rome, which exist no longer in their former glory. In trying to learn from them, the Europeans imagine that they will avoid the mistakes of Greece and Rome. Such is their pitiable condition. In the midst of all this India remains immovable and that is her glory. It is a charge against India that her people are so uncivilized, ignorant and stolid, that it is not possible to induce them to adopt any changes. It is a charge really against our merit. What we have tested and found

true on the anvil of experience, we dare not change. Many thrust their advice upon India, and she remains steady. This is her beauty : it is the sheetanchor of our hope.

Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent for civilization means "good conduct."

If this definition be correct, then India, as so many writers have shown, has nothing to learn from anybody else, and this is as it should be. We notice that the mind is a restless bird; the more it gets the more it wants and still remains unsatisfied. The more we indulge our passions, the more unbridled they become. Our ancestors, therefore, set a limit to our indulgences. They saw that happiness was largely a mental condition. A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor. The rich are often seen to be unhappy, the poor to be happy. Millions will always remain poor. Observing all this, our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures. We have managed with the same kind of plough as existed thousands of years ago. We have retained the same kind of cottages that we had in former times and our indigenous education remains the same as before. We have had no system of life-corroding competition. Each followed his own occupation or trade and charged a regulation wage.

It was not that we did not know how to invent machinery, but our forefathers knew that, if we set our hearts after such things, we would become slaves and lose our moral fibre. They, therefore, after due deliberation decided that we should only do what we could with our hands and feet. They saw that our real happiness and health consisted in a proper use of our hands and feet. They further reasoned that large cities were a snare and a useless encumbrance and that people would not be happy in them, that there would be gangs of thieves and robbers, prostitution and vice flourishing in them and that poor men would be robbed by rich men. They were, therefore, satisfied with small villages. They saw that kings and their swords were inferior to the sword of ethics, and they, therefore, held the sovereigns of the earth to be inferior to the *rishis* and the fakirs. A nation with a constitution like this is fitter to teach others than to learn from others. This nation had courts, lawyers and doctors, but they were all within bounds. Everybody knew that these professions were not particularly superior; moreover, these *vakils* and *vaid*s did not rob people; they were considered people's dependants, not their masters. Justice was tolerably fair. The ordinary rule was to avoid courts. There were no touts to lure people into them. This evil, too, was noticeable only in



and around capitals. The common people lived independently and followed their agricultural occupation. They enjoyed true Home Rule.

The Indian civilization, as described by me, has been so described by its votaries. In no part of the world, and under no civilization, have all men attained perfection. The tendency of the Indian civilization is to elevate the moral being, that of the Western civilization is to propagate immorality. The latter is godless, the former is based on a belief in God. So understanding and so believing, it behoves every lover of India to cling to the old Indian civilization even as a child clings to the mother's breast.

This civilization is unquestionably the best, but it is to be observed that all civilizations have been on their trial. That civilization which is permanent outlives it. Because the sons of India were found wanting, its civilization has been placed in jeopardy. But its strength is to be seen in its ability to survive the shock. Moreover, the whole of India is not touched. Those alone who have been affected by Western civilization have become enslaved. We measure the universe by our own miserable foot-rule. When we are slaves, we think that the whole universe is enslaved. Because we are in an abject condition, we think that the whole of India is in that condition. As a matter of fact, it is not so, yet it is as well to impute our slavery to the whole of India. But if we bear in mind the above fact, we can see that if we become free, India is free. And in this thought you have a definition of Swaraj. It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves. It is, therefore, in the palm of our hands. Do not consider this Swaraj to be like a dream. There is no idea of sitting still. The Swaraj that I wish to picture is such that, after we have once realized it, we shall endeavour to the end of our life-time to persuade others to do likewise. But such Swaraj has to be experienced, by each one for himself. One drowning man will never save another. Slaves ourselves, it would be a mere pretension to think of freeing others. Now you will have seen that it is not necessary for us to have as our goal the expulsion of the English. If the English become Indianized, we can accommodate them. If they wish to remain in India along with their civilization, there is no room for them. It lies with us to bring about such a state of things.

## SWARAJ AND SELF-RELIANCE

*I* take the reader's leave to put before him the various definitions of Swaraj which I keep formulating in my mind.

- 1) Swaraj means rule over one's self. One who has achieved this has fulfilled his individual pledge.
- 2) We have, however, thought of Swaraj in terms of some symbol or image. Swaraj, therefore, means the complete control by the people of the country's imports and exports, of its army and its law courts. This is the meaning of the pledge taken in December. Such Swaraj may or may not have room for the British connection. If there is no solution of the Punjab and the Khilafat issues, there will be no room for such connection.
- 3) But then it is possible that sadhus as individuals enjoy Swaraj even at present, and that, even when we have a parliament of our own, people may not feel that they are free. Swaraj, therefore, means easy availability of food and cloth, so much so that no one would go hungry or naked for want of them.
- 4) Even under such circumstances, it may happen that one community or section seeks to suppress another. Swaraj, therefore, means conditions in which a young girl could, without danger, move about alone even at dead of night.
- 5) These four definitions will be found to include many others. Nevertheless, if Swaraj has infused—and it ought to infuse—a new spirit in every one of the classes which make up the nation, it will mean total disappearance of the practice of treating *Antyajas* as untouchables.
- 6) End of the Brahmin-non-Brahmin quarrel.
- 7) Complete disappearance of the evil passions in the hearts of Hindu and Muslims. This means that a Hindu should respect a Muslim's feelings and should be ready to lay down his life for him, and *vice versa*. Muslims should not slaughter cows for the purpose of hurting Hindus; on the contrary, they should on their own refrain from cow-slaughter so as to spare the latter's feelings. Likewise, without asking for anything in return, Hindus should stop playing music before mosques with the purpose of hurting Muslims, should actually feel proud in not playing music while passing by a mosque.
- 8) Swaraj means that Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Jews should all be able to follow their own faith and should respect those of others.

- 9) Swaraj means that every town or village should be strong enough to protect itself against thieves and robbers and should produce the food and cloth that it requires.
- 10) Swaraj means mutual regard between the princes or zemindars on the one hand and their subjects on the other, that the former should not harass the latter and the latter, in their turn, should give no trouble to the former.
- 11) Swaraj means mutual regard between the rich and working class. It means the latter working gladly for the former for adequate wages.
- 12) Swaraj means looking upon every woman as a mother or sister and respecting her to the utmost. It means doing away with the distinctions of high and low, and acting towards all with the same regard as for one's brother or sister.

It follows from these definitions that in Swaraj (1) the Government will not trade in liquor, opium and things of that kind; (2) no speculation can be permitted in food grains and cotton; (3) no person will break a law; (4) there can be no room at all for wilfulness, which means that a person cannot act as a judge when he is himself charged with something, but should let the charge be examined in a duly established court in the country.

CWMG Vol. 20; Pp. 506-7

## INDEPENDENCE MUST BEGIN AT THE BOTTOM

*I*ndependence of India should mean independence of the whole of India, including what is called India of states and the other foreign powers—French and Portuguese—who are there, I presume, by British sufferance. Independence must mean that of the people of India, not of those who are today ruling over them. The rulers should depend on the will of those who are under their heels. Thus, they have to be servants of the people, ready to do their will.

Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or panchayat, having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs, even to the extent of defending itself against the whole

world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of the mutual forces. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man and woman knows what he or she wants and, what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labour.

This society must naturally be based on truth and non-violence which in my opinion, are not possible without a living belief in God meaning a self-existent all-knowing living force which inheres every other force known to the world and which depends on none and which will live when all other forces may conceivably perish or cease to act. I am unable to account for my life without belief in this all-embracing living light.

In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever-widening, never ascending, circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But, it will be an oceanic circle, whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of the villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle, but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it. I may be taunted with the retort that this is all Utopian and, therefore, not worth a single thought. If Euclid's point, though incapable of being drawn by human agency, has an imperishable value, my picture has its own for mankind to live. Let India live for this true picture, though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want, before we can have something approaching it. If there ever is to be a republic of every village in India, then I claim verity for my picture in which the last is equal to the first or, in other words, no one is to be the first and none the last.

In this picture every religion has its full and equal place. We are all leaves of a majestic tree whose trunk cannot be shaken off its roots which are deep down in the bowels of the earth. The mightiest wind cannot move it.

In this, there is no room for machines that would displace human labour and that would concentrate power in few hands. Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family. Every machine that helps every

individual has a place. But, I must confess that I have never sat down to think out what that machine can be. I have thought of Singer's sewing machine. But even that is perfunctory. I do not need it to fill in my picture.

*Harijan*, 28-7-1946; p. 236

## TOWARDS SELF-RELIANCE

*I* shall strive for a constitution which will release India from all thralldom and patronage, and give her, if need be, the right to sin. I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony.

There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability or the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men. Since we shall be at peace with all the rest of the world, neither exploiting nor being exploited, we should have the smallest army imaginable.

All interests not in conflict with the interests of the dumb millions will be scrupulously respected, whether foreign or indigenous. Personally, I hate distinction between foreign and indigenous.

This is the India of my dreams for which I shall struggle at the next Round Table Conference. I may fail, but if I am to deserve the confidence of the Congress, I shall be satisfied with nothing less.

CWMG Vol. 47; Pp. 388-89

## EDUCATION

*W*hat is the meaning of education? It simply means a knowledge of letters. It is merely an instrument, and an instrument may be well used or abused. The same instrument that may be used to cure a patient may be used to take his life, and so may a knowledge of letters. We daily observe that many men abuse it and very few make good

use of it; and if this is a correct statement, we have proved that more harm has been done by it than good.

The ordinary meaning of education is a knowledge of letters. To teach boys reading, writing and arithmetic is called primary education. A peasant earns his bread honestly. He has ordinary knowledge of the world. He knows fairly well how he should behave towards his parents, his wife, his children and his fellow-villagers. He understands and observes the rules of morality. But he cannot write his own name. What do you propose to do by giving him a knowledge of letters? Will you add an inch to his happiness? Do you wish to make him discontented with his cottage or his lot? And even if you want to do that, he will not need such an education. Carried away by the flood of Western thought we came to the conclusion, without weighing pros and cons, that we should give this kind of education to the people.

Now let us take higher education. I have learned Geography, Astronomy, Algebra, Geometry, etc. What of that? In what way have I benefited myself or those around me? Why have I learned these things? Professor Huxley has thus defined education :

That man I think has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logical engine with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order ... whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the fundamental truths of nature ... whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience...who has learnt to hate all vileness and to respect others as himself. Such a one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education, for he is in harmony with nature. He will make the best of her and she of him.

If this is true education, I must emphatically say that the sciences I have enumerated above I have never been able to use for controlling my senses. Therefore, whether you take elementary education or higher education, it is not required for the main thing. It does not make men of us. It does not enable us to do our duty.

## WE MUST BUILD OUR OWN HERITAGE

I must not be understood to decry English or its noble literature. The columns of *Harijan* are sufficient evidence of my love of English. But the nobility of its literature cannot avail the Indian nation any more than the temperate climate or the scenery of England can avail her. India has to flourish in her own climate and scenery and her own literature, even though all the three may be inferior to the English climate, scenery and literature. We and our children must build on our own heritage. If we borrow another, we impoverish our own. We can never grow on foreign victuals. I want the nation to have the treasures contained in that language, and for that matter the other languages of the world, through its own vernaculars. I do not need to learn Bengali in order to know the beauties of Rabindranath's matchless productions. I get them through good translations. Gujarati boys and girls do not need to learn Russian to appreciate Tolstoy's short stories. They learn them through good translations. It is the boast of Englishmen that the best of the world's literary output is in the hands of that nation in simple English inside of a week of its publication. Why need I learn English to get at the best of what Shakespeare and Milton thought and wrote?

It would be good economy to set apart a class of students whose business would be to learn the best of what is to be learnt in different languages of the world and give the translation in the vernaculars. Our masters chose the wrong way for us, and habit has made the wrong appear as right.

I find daily proof of the increasing and continuing wrong being done to the millions by our false de-Indianizing education. Those graduates who are my valued associates themselves flounder when they have to give expression to their innermost thoughts. They are strangers in their own homes. Their vocabulary in the mother tongue is so limited that they cannot always finish their speech without having recourse to English words and even sentences. Nor can they exist without English books. They often write to one another in English. I cite the case of my companions to show how deep the evil has gone. For we have made a conscious effort to mind ourselves.

It has been argued that the wastage that occurs in our colleges need not worry us if, out of the collegians, one Jagdish Bose can be produced by them. I should freely subscribe to the argument if the wastage was unavoidable. I hope I have shown that it was and is even now avoidable. Moreover, the creation of a Bose does not help the argument. For Bose was not a product of the present education. He rose in spite of the terrible handicaps under which he had to labour.

And his knowledge became almost intransmissible to the masses. We seem to have come to think that no one can hope to be like a Bose unless he knows English. I cannot conceive a grosser superstition than this. No Japanese feels so helpless as we seem to do.

Nothing but a heroic remedy can deal with the deep-seated evil which I have endeavoured to describe. The Congress Ministers can, if they will, mitigate it if they cannot remove it.

Universities must be made self-supporting. The State should simply educate those whose services it would need. For all other branches of learning it should encourage private effort. The medium of instruction should be altered at once and at any cost, the provincial languages being given their rightful place. I would prefer temporary chaos in higher education to the criminal waste that is daily accumulating.

In order to enhance the status and the market value of the provincial languages, I would have the language of the law courts to be the language of the province where the court is situated. The proceedings of the Provincial Legislatures must be in the language, or even the languages of the province where a province has more than one language within its borders. I suggest to the legislators that they could, by enough application inside of a month, understand the languages of their provinces. There is nothing to prevent a Tamilian from easily learning the simple grammar and a few hundred words of Telugu, Malayalam and Kanarese, all allied to Tamil. At the centre Hindustani must rule supreme.

In my opinion this is not a question to be decided by academicians. They cannot decide through what language the boys and girls of a place are to be educated. The question is already decided for them in every free country. Nor can they decide the subjects to be taught. That depends upon the wants of the country to which they belong. Theirs is the privilege of enforcing the nation's will in the best manner possible. When this country becomes really free the question of medium will be settled only one way. The academicians will frame the syllabus and prepare text-books accordingly. And the products of the education of a free India will answer the requirements of the country as today they answer those of the foreign ruler. So long as we the educated classes play with this question, I very much fear we shall not produce the free and healthy India of our dream. We have to grow by strenuous effort out of our bondage, whether it is educational, economical, social or political. The effort itself is three-fourths of the battle.



## CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

*T*he Working Committee has emphasized the necessity of the members of the Legislatures and other workers taking the constructive programme of 1920 to the three crore villagers between whom and their representatives a direct contact has been established. The representatives may, if they choose, neglect them, or give them some paltry or even substantial relief from financial burdens; but they cannot give them self-confidence, dignity, and the power of continuously bettering their own position unless they will interest them in the fourfold constructive programme, i.e., universal production and use of khadi through universal hand-spinning, Hindu-Muslim or rather communal unity, promotion of total prohibition by propaganda among those who are addicted to the drink habit, and removal by Hindus of untouchability root and branch.

It was announced in 1920 and 1921 from a thousand platforms that attainment of Swaraj by the non-violent method was impossible without these four things. I hold that it is not less true today.

It is one thing to improve the economic condition of the masses by State regulation of taxation, and wholly another for them to feel that they have bettered their condition by their own sole personal effort. Now this they can only do through hand-spinning and other village handicrafts.

Similarly it is one thing to regulate communal conduct by means of pacts between leaders, voluntary or imposed by the State; it is wholly different for the masses to respect one another's religious and outward observances. This cannot be done unless the legislators and workers would go out among the villagers and teach them mutual toleration.

Again it is one thing to impose, as we must, prohibition by law, and another to sustain it by willing obedience to it. It is a defeatist, arm-chair mentality which says that it cannot work without an expensive and elaborate system of espionage. Surely if the workers went out to the villagers and demonstrated the evil of drink wherever it is prevalent, and if research scholars found out the causes of alcoholism and proper knowledge was imparted to the people, prohibition should not only prove inexpensive but profitable. This is a work essentially for women to handle.

Lastly, we may banish by statute, as we must, the evil consequences of untouchability. But we cannot have real independence unless people banish the touch-me-not spirit from their hearts. The masses cannot act as one man or with one mind unless they eradicate untouchability from their hearts.

Thus, this and the three other items are a matter of true mass education. And it has become imperatively necessary now that three crores of men and women have rightly or wrongly power put into their hands. However hedged in it is, Congressmen and others who want the sufferages of these voters have it in their hands either to educate the three crores of mankind along the right lines or the wrong. It would be the wrong line to neglect them altogether in matters which most vitally concern them.

CWMG Vol. 65; Pp. 199-200.

## SWADESHI

*I*t was not without much diffidence that I undertook to speak to you at all. And I was hard put to it in the selection of my subject. I have chosen a very delicate and difficult subject. It is delicate because of the peculiar views I hold upon swadeshi, and it is difficult because I have not that command of language which is necessary for giving adequate expression to my thoughts. I know that I may rely upon your indulgence for the many short-comings you will no doubt find in my address, the more so when I tell you that there is nothing in what I am about to say that I am not either already practising or am not preparing to practise to the best of my ability. It encourages me to observe that last month you devoted a week to prayer in the place of an address. I have earnestly prayed that what I am about to say may bear fruit and I know that you will bless my words with a similar prayer.

After much thinking, I have arrived at a definition of swadeshi that perhaps best illustrates my meaning. Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Thus, as for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion. That is the use of my immediate religious surroundings. If I find it defective, I should serve it by purging it of its defects. In the domain of politics, I should make use of the indigenous and serve them by curing them of their proved defects. In that of economics, I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting. It is suggested that such swadeshi, if reduced to practice, will lead to the millennium. And as we do not abandon our pursuit after the millennium

because we do not expect quite to reach it within our time, so may we not abandon swadeshi even though it may not be fully attained for generations to come.

Let us briefly examine three branches of swadeshi as sketched above. Hinduism has become a conservative religion and therefore a mighty force because of the swadeshi spirit underlying it. It is the most tolerant because it is non-proselytizing, and it is as capable of expansion today as it has been found to be in the past. It has succeeded not in driving, as I think it has been erroneously held, but in absorbing Buddhism. By reason of the swadeshi spirit, a Hindu refuses to change his religion not necessarily because he considers it to be the best, but because he knows that he can complement it by introducing reforms. And what I have said about Hinduism is, I suppose, true of the other great faiths of the world, only it is held that it is specially so in the case of Hinduism. But here comes the point I am labouring to reach. If there is any substance in what I have said, will not the great missionary bodies of India, to whom she owes a deep debt of gratitude for what they have done and are doing, do still better and serve the spirit of Christianity better, by dropping the goal of proselytizing but continuing their philanthropic work? I hope you will not consider this to be an impertinence on my part. I make the suggestion in all sincerity and with due humility.

Moreover, I have some claim upon your attention. I have endeavoured to study the Bible. I consider it as part of my scriptures. The spirit of the *Sermon on the Mount* competes almost on equal terms with the *Bhagavad Gita* for the domination of my heart. I yield to no Christian in the strength of devotion with which I sing "Lead, kindly Light" and several other inspired hymns of a similar nature. I have come under the influence of noted Christian missionaries belonging to different denominations. And I enjoy to this day the privilege of friendship with some of them. You will perhaps therefore allow that I have offered the above suggestion not as a biased Hindu but as a humble and impartial student of religion with great learning towards Christianity. May it not be that the "Go Ye unto All the World" message has been somewhat narrowly interpreted and the spirit of it missed? It will not be denied, I speak from experience, that many of the conversions are only so called. In some cases, the appeal has gone not to the heart but to the stomach. And in every case, a conversion leaves a sore behind it which, I venture to think is avoidable. Quoting again from experience, a new birth, a change of heart, is perfectly possible in every one of the great faiths. I know I am now treading upon thin ice. But I do not apologize, in closing this part of my subject, for saying that the frightful outrage that is just going on in Europe, perhaps, shows that the message of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Peace, has

been little understood in Europe, and that light upon it may have to be thrown from the East.

I have sought your help in religious matters, which it is yours to give in a special sense. But I make bold to seek it even in political matters. I do not believe that religion has nothing to do with politics. The latter divorced from religion is like a corpse only fit to be buried. As a matter of fact, in your own silent manner, you influence politics not a little. And I feel that if the attempt to separate politics from religion had not been made, as it is even now made, they would not have degenerated, as they often appear to do. No one considers that the political life of the country is in a happy state. Following out the swadeshi spirit, I observe the indigenous institutions and the village panchayats hold me. India is really a republican country, and it is because it is that it has survived every shock hitherto delivered. Princes and potentates, whether they were Indian-born or foreigners, have already touched the vast masses except for collecting revenue. The latter in their turn seem to have rendered unto Caesar what was Caesar's and for the rest have done much as they have liked. The vast organization of caste answered not only the religious wants of the community, but it answered too its political needs. The villagers managed their internal affairs through the caste system, and through it they dealt with any oppression from the ruling power or powers. It is not possible to deny of a nation that was capable of producing the caste system its wonderful power of organization. One had but to attend the great Kumbha Mela at Hardwar last year to know how skilful that organization must have been, which without any seeming effort, was able effectively to cater for more than a million pilgrims. Yet it is the fashion to say that we lack organizing ability.

This is true, I fear, to a certain extent, of those who have been nurtured in the new traditions. We have laboured under a terrible handicap owing to an almost fatal departure from the swadeshi spirit. We the educated classes have received our education through a foreign tongue. We have therefore not reacted upon the masses. We want to represent the masses, but we fail. They recognize us not much more than they recognize the English Officers. Their hearts are an open book to neither. Their aspirations are not ours. Hence there is a break. And you witness not in reality failure to organize, but want of correspondence between the representatives and the represented. If during the last fifty years we had been educated through the vernaculars, our elders and our servants and our neighbours would have partaken of our knowledge; the discoveries of a Bose or a Ray would have been household treasure as are the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat*. As it is, so far as the masses are concerned, those great discoveries might as well have been made by foreigners. Had instructions in all

the branches of learning been given through the vernaculars, I make bold to say that they would have been enriched wonderfully. The question of village sanitation etc. would have been solved long ago. The village panchayats would be now a living force in a special way, and India would almost be enjoying self-government suited to its requirements and would have been spared the humiliating spectacle of organized assassination on its sacred soil. It is not too late to mend. And you can help if you will, as no other body or bodies can.

And now for the last division of swadeshi. Much of the deep poverty of the masses is due to the ruinous departure from swadeshi in the economic and industrial life. If not an article of commerce had been brought from outside India, she would be today a land flowing with milk and honey. But that was not to be. We were greedy and so was England. The connection between England and India was based clearly upon an error. But she (England) does not remain in India in error. It is her declared policy that India is to be held in trust for her people. If this be true, Lancashire must stand aside. And if the swadeshi doctrine is a sound doctrine, Lancashire can stand aside without hurt, though it may sustain a shock for the time being. I think of swadeshi not as a boycott movement undertaken by way of revenge. I conceive it as a religious principle to be followed by all. I am no economist, but I have read some treatises which show that England could easily become a self-sustained country, growing all the produce she needs. This may be an utterly ridiculous proposition, and perhaps the best proof that it cannot be true is that England is one of the largest importers in the world.

But India cannot live for Lancashire or any other country before she is able to live for herself. And she can live for herself only if she produces and is helped to produce everything for her requirements within her own borders. She need not be, she ought not to be, drawn into the vortex of mad and ruinous competition which breeds fratricide, jealousy and many other evils. But who is to stop her great millionaires from entering into the world competition? Certainly, not legislation. Force of public opinion, proper education, however, can do a great deal in the desired direction. The handloom industry is in a dying condition. I took special care during my wanderings last year to see as many weavers as possible, and my heart ached to find how they had lost, how families had retired from this once-flourishing and honourable occupation. If we follow the swadeshi doctrine, it would be your duty and mine to find out neighbours who can supply our wants and to teach them to supply them where they do not know how to, assuming that there are neighbours who are in want of healthy occupation. Then every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit exchanging only such necessary commodities with our other villages where they are not locally predicable. This may all sound nonsensical.

Well, India is a country of nonsense. It is nonsensical to parch one's throat with thirst when a kindly Mahomedan is ready to offer pure water to drink. And yet thousands of Hindus would rather die of thirst than drink water from a Mahomedan household. These nonsensical men can also, once they are convinced that their religion demands that they should wear garments manufactured in India only and eat food only grown in India, decline to wear any other clothing or eat any other food. Lord Curzon set the fashion for tea-drinking. And that pernicious drug now bids fair to overwhelm the nation. It has already undermined the digestive apparatus of hundreds of thousands of men and women and constitutes an additional tax upon their slender purses. Lord Hardinge can set the fashion for swadeshi and almost the whole of India will foreswear foreign goods. There is a *Bhagavad Gita*, which, freely rendered, means masses follow the classes. It is easy to undo the evil if the thinking portion of the community were to take the swadeshi vow even though it may for a time cause considerable inconvenience. I hate interference in any department of life. At best, it is the lesser evil. But I would tolerate, welcome, indeed plead for, stiff protective duty upon foreign goods. Natal, a British colony, protected its sugar by taxing the sugar that came from another British colony, Mauritius. England has sinned against India by forcing free trade upon her. It may have been food for her, but it has been poison for this country.

It has often been urged that India cannot adopt swadeshi in the economic life at any rate. Those who advance this objection do not look upon swadeshi as a rule of life. With them, it is a mere patriotic effort not to be made if it involved any self-denial. Swadeshi, as defined here, is a religious discipline to be undergone in utter disregard of the physical discomfort it may cause to individuals. Under its spell, the deprivation of a pin or a needle, because these are not manufactured in India, need cause no terror. A swadeshi will learn to do without hundreds of things which today he considers necessary. Moreover, those who dismiss swadeshi from their minds by arguing the impossible forget that swadeshi, after all, is a goal to be reached by steady effort. And we would be making for the goal even if we confined swadeshi to a given set of articles, allowing ourselves as a temporary measure to use such things as might not be procurable in the country.

There now remains for me to consider one more objection that has been raised against swadeshi. The objectors consider it to be a most selfish doctrine without any warrant in the civilized code of morality. With them, to practise swadeshi is to revert to barbarism. I cannot enter into a detailed analysis of the preposition. But I would urge that swadeshi is the only doctrine consistent with the law of humility and love. It is arrogance to think of launching out to serve the whole of

India when I am hardly able to serve even my own family. It were better to concentrate my effort upon the family and consider that through them I was serving the whole nation and, if you will, the whole of humanity. This is humility and it is love. The motive will determine the quality of the act. I may serve my family regardless of the sufferings I may cause to others, as, for instance, I may accept employment which enables me to extort money from people. I enrich myself thereby and then satisfy many unlawful demands of the family. Here I am neither serving the family nor the State. Or I may recognize that God has given me hands and feet only to work with for my sustenance and for that of those who may be dependent upon me. I would then at once simplify my life and that of those whom I can directly reach. In this instance, I would have served the family without causing injury to anyone else. Supposing that everyone followed this mode of life, we would have at once an ideal State. All will not reach that state at the same time. But those of us who realizing its truth, enforce it in practice will clearly anticipate and accelerate the coming of that happy day. Under this plan of life, in seeming to serve India to the exclusion of every other country, I do not harm any other country. My patriotism is both exclusive and inclusive. It is exclusive in the sense that in all humility I confine my attention to the land of my birth, but it is inclusive in the sense that my service is not of a competitive or antagonistic nature. *Sic utere tuo alienum non laedas*<sup>1</sup> is not merely a legal maxim, but it is a grand doctrine of life. It is the key to a proper practice of ahimsa or love. It is for you, the custodians of a great faith, to set the fashion and show by your preaching, sanctified by practice, that patriotism based on hatred "killeth" and that patriotism based on love "giveth life."

CWMG Vol. 13; Pp. 219-25

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<sup>1</sup>This Latin legal maxim means: "Use your property in such a way as not to damage that of others."

## DEFINITION OF SWADESHI

*M*y definition of swadeshi is well known. I must not serve distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest. It is never vindictive or punitive. It is in no sense narrow, for I buy from every part of the world what is needed for my growth, I refuse to buy from anybody anything however nice or beautiful if it interferes with my growth or injures those whom Nature has made my first care. I buy useful healthy literature from every part of the world. I buy surgical instruments from England, pins and pencils from Austria and watches from Switzerland. But I will not buy an inch of the finest cotton fabric from England or Japan or any other part of the world because it has injured and increasingly injures the millions of the inhabitants of India. I hold it to be sinful for me (not) to buy the cloth spun and woven by the needy millions of India's paupers and to buy foreign cloth, although it may be superior in quality to the Indian hand-spun. My swadeshi therefore chiefly centres round the hand-spun khaddar and extends to every thing that can be and is produced in India. My nationalism is as broad as my swadeshi. I want India's rise so that the whole world may benefit. I do not want India to rise on the ruin of other nations. If therefore India was strong and able, India would send out to the world her treasures of art and health-giving spices; but will refuse to send out opium or intoxicating liquors although the traffic may bring much material benefit to India.

CWMG Vol. 26; Pp. 278-79

## VOW OF SWADESHI

*S*wadeshi is the law of laws enjoined by the present age. Spiritual laws, like Nature's laws need no enacting; they are self-acting. But through ignorance or other causes man often neglects or disobeys them. It is then vows are needed to steady one's course. A man who is by temperament a vegetarian needs no vow to strengthen his vegetarianism. For, the sight of animal food, instead of tempting him would only excite his disgust. The law of swadeshi is ingrained in the basic nature of man but it has today sunk into oblivion. Hence the necessity for the vow of swadeshi. In its ultimate and spiritual sense swadeshi stands for the final emancipation of the human soul from its earthly bondage. For, this earthly tabernacle if not its natural or



permanent abode, it is a hindrance in its onward journey, it stands in the way of its realizing its oneness with other lives. A votary of swadeshi therefore, in his striving to identify himself with the entire creation seeks to be emancipated from the bondage of the physical body.

If this interpretation of swadeshi be correct then it follows that its votary will as a first duty dedicate himself to the service of his immediate neighbours. This involves exclusion or even sacrifice of the interests of the rest but the exclusion of the sacrifice would be apparent only. Pure service of one's neighbours can never, from its very nature, result in disservice to those who are remotely situated, rather the contrary. 'As with the individual so with the universe' is an unfailing principle which we would do well to lay to heart. On the other hand a man who allows himself to be lured by 'the distant scene' and runs to the ends of the earth for service, is not only foiled in his ambition but fails in his duty towards his neighbours also. Take a concrete instance. In the particular place where I live I have certain persons as my neighbours, some relations and dependents. Naturally, they all feel, as they have a right to, that they have a claim on me and look to me for help and support. Suppose now I leave them all at once and set out to serve people in a distant place. My decision would throw my little world of neighbours and dependents out of gear while my gratuitous knight-errantry would more likely than not disturb the atmosphere in the new place. Thus a culpable neglect of my immediate neighbours and unintended disservice to the people whom I wish to serve would be the first fruits of my violation of the principles of swadeshi.

It is not difficult to multiply such instances. That is why the *Gita* says : "It is better to die performing one's duty or *swadharma*, but *paradharma*, or another's duty, is fraught with danger." Interpreted in terms of one's physical environment this gives us the law of swadeshi. What the *Gita* says with regard to *swadharma* equally applies to swadeshi also, for swadeshi is *swadharma* applied to one's immediate environment.

It is only when the doctrine of swadeshi is wrongly understood that mischief results, e.g., it would be a travesty of the doctrine of swadeshi, if to coddle my family I set about grabbing money by all means fair or foul. The law of swadeshi requires me no more than to discharge my legitimate obligations towards my family by just means, and the attempt to do so will reveal to me the Universal Code of Conduct. The practice of swadeshi can never do harm to anyone and if it does it is not *swadharma* but egotism that moves me.

There may come occasions when a votary of swadeshi may be called upon to sacrifice his family at the altar of universal service. Such an act of willing immolation will then constitute the higher service

rendered to the family. "Whosoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whosoever loses his life for the Lord's sake will find it," holds good for the family group no less than the individual. Take another instance. Supposing there is an outbreak of the plague in my village and in trying to serve the victims of the epidemic, I, my wife and children and all the rest of my family are wiped out of existence, then, in inducing those dearest and nearest to join me I will not have acted as the destroyer of my family but on the contrary as its truest friend. In swadeshi there is no room for selfishness, or if there is selfishness in it, it is of the highest type which is not different from the highest altruism. Swadeshi in its purest form is the acme of universal service.

It was by following this line of argument that I hit upon khadi as a necessary and the most important corollary of the principle of swadeshi in its application to society. 'What is the kind of service,' I asked myself, 'that the teeming millions of India most need at the present time, that can be easily understood and appreciated by all, that is easy to perform and will at the same time enable the crores of our semi-starved countrymen to live,' and the reply came that it is the universalization of khadi or the spinning-wheel alone that can fulfil these conditions.

Let no one suppose that the practice of swadeshi through khadi would harm the foreign mill-owners. A thief who is weaned from his vice or is made to return the property that he has stolen is not harmed thereby, on the contrary he is the gainer consciously in the one case, unconsciously in the other. Similarly if all the opium addicts or the drunkards in the world were to shake themselves free from their vice, the canteen keepers or the opium vendors who would be deprived of their customers could not be said to be losers. They would be the gainers in the truest sense of the word. The elimination of the 'wages of sin' is never a loss either to the individual concerned or to society; it is pure gain.

It is the greatest delusion to suppose that the duty of swadeshi begins and ends with merely spinning so much yarn anyhow and wearing khadi made from it. Khadi is the first indispensable step towards the discharge of swadeshi dharma towards society. One often meets men who wear khadi but in all other things indulge their taste for foreign manufactures with a vengeance. Such men cannot be said to be practising swadeshi. They are simply following the fashion. A votary of swadeshi will carefully study his environment and try to help his neighbours wherever possible by giving preference to local manufactures even if they are of an inferior grade or dearer in price than things manufactured elsewhere. He will try to remedy their defects but will not give them up because of their defects and take to foreign manufactures.

But even swadeshi like any other good thing can be ridden to death if it is made a fetish. That is a danger that must be guarded against. To reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign and to go on wasting national time and money to promote manufactures in one's country for which it is not suited would be criminal folly and a negation of the swadeshi spirit. A true votary of swadeshi will never harbour ill-will towards the foreigner, he will not be moved by antagonism towards anybody on earth. Swadeshism is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service that has its roots in the purest ahimsa, i.e., love.

CWMG Vol. 46, Pp. 254-7

## SOCIAL INEQUALITY

*Varnashrama*, in my opinion, was not conceived in any narrow spirit. On the contrary, it gave the labourer, the *Sudra*, the same status as the thinker, the Brahmin. It provided for the accentuation of merit and elimination of demerit, and it transferred human ambition from the general worldly sphere to the permanent and the spiritual. The aim of the Brahmin and the *Sudra* was common—*moksha*, or self-realization—not realization of fame, riches and power. Later on, this lofty conception of *Varnashrama* became degraded and came to be identified with mere empty ceremonial and assumption of superiority by some and imposition of degradation upon others. This admission is not a demonstration of the weakness of *Varnashrama*, but of human nature which, if it has a tendency under certain circumstances to rise to the highest point, it has also a tendency under certain other circumstances to go down to the lowest. What the reformer seeks to do is to end the curse of untouchability and to restore *Varnashrama* to its proper place. Whether *Varnashrama* thus transmuted will survive the reform or not remains to be seen. It will surely depend upon the new Brahmin class that is imperceptibly coming into being, namely, those who are dedicating themselves, body, soul and mind, to service of Hinduism and the country. If they have nothing of worldly ambition, it will be well with Hinduism, if they have, Hinduism, like any other “ism”, coming into the hands of ambitious men, will perish. But I have an immutable faith in the capacity of Hinduism to purge itself of all impurities from time to time. I do not think that that capacity is now exhausted.

CWMG Vol. 28; Pp. 61-62

## THE GREATEST BLOT ON HINDUISM

Untouchability as at present practised is the greatest blot on Hinduism. It is (with apologies to sanatanists) against the Shastras. It is against the fundamental principles of humanity, it is against the dictates of reason that a man should, by mere reason of birth, be forever regarded as an untouchable, even unapproachable and unseeable. These adjectives do convey the full meaning of the thing itself. It is a crime for certain men, women and their children to touch, or to approach within stated distances, or to be seen by those who are called caste Hindus. The tragedy is that millions of Hindus believe in this institution as if it was enjoined by the Hindu religion.

Happily, Hindu reformers have recoiled with horror from this practice. They have come to the conclusion that it has no support in the Hindu Shastras taken as a whole. Isolated texts torn from their context and considered by themselves can no doubt be produced in support of this practice, as of any evil known to mankind. But there is abundant authority in the Shastras to warrant the summary rejection, as being un-Hindu, of anything or any practice that is manifestly against the fundamental principles of humanity or morality, of ahimsa or *satya*.

CWMG Vol. 53; Pp. 262

## UNTOUCHABILITY AND CASTE SYSTEM

Untouchability is the product, therefore, not of the caste system, but of the distinction of high and low that has crept into Hinduism and is corroding it. The attack on untouchability is thus an attack upon this 'high-and-low' ness. The moment untouchability goes, the caste system itself will be purified, that is to say, according to my dream, it will resolve itself into the true *varnadharma*, the four divisions of society, each complementary of the other and none inferior or superior to any other, each as necessary for the whole body of Hinduism as any other.

CWMG Vol. 63; Pp. 261

## COMMUNAL HARMONY

*I* have not lost hope that I shall live to see real unity established between not only Hindus and Muslims but all the communities that make India a nation. If I knew the way to achieve it today, I know that I have the will and the strength to take it, however difficult or thorny it may be. I know too that the shortest and the surest way lies through non-violence.

Some Muslim friends tell me that Muslims will never subscribe to un-adulterated non-violence. With them, they say, violence is as lawful and necessary as non-violence. The use of either depends upon circumstances. It does not need Koranic authority to justify the lawfulness of both. That is the well-known path the world has traversed through the ages. There is no such thing as unadulterated violence in the world. But I have heard it from many Muslim friends that the Koran teaches the use of non-violence.

It regards forbearance as superior to vengeance. The very word Islam means peace, which is non-violence. Badshah Khan, a staunch Muslim who never misses his *namaz* and Ramzan, has accepted out-and-out non-violence as his creed. It would be no answer to say that he does not live up to our creed, even as I know to my shame that I do not. If there is difference in our actions, the difference is not one of kind, it is of degree. But argument about non-violence in the holy Koran is an interpolation, not necessary for my thesis.

I hold that for the full play of non-violence only one party need believe in it. Indeed if both believe in it and live up to it, there is no appreciation or demonstration of it. To live at peace with one another is the most natural thing to do. But neither party gains the merit that the exercise of non-violence carries with it. Unfortunately, at the present moment, those Hindus who do not know the use of violence, though they have it in their hearts, are sorry for their incapacity and would fain learn the trick—I won't call it the art—of violence, so as to be able to match what they describe as Muslim violence. And if peace is to be brought about by both parties being equally matched in the use of violence both offensive and defensive, I know that peace will not come in my lifetime and, if it came, I should not care to be witness of it. It will be an armed peace to be broken at any moment. Such has been the peace in Europe. Is not the present war enough to make one sick of such peace?

Muslim friends who hope much from me will perhaps now recognize my agony for the unattainment of peace in spite of the travail that I have gone through and am still going through. They should also see

that my principal work lies through teaching at least the Hindus to learn the art of non-violence unless I can bring the Muslims to the position the Ali Brothers and their associates took up during the Khilafat days. They used to say: "Even if our Hindu brethren cut us to pieces, yet will we love them. They are our kith and kin." The late Maulana Abdul Bari used to say: "Muslims of India will never forget the ungrudging and unconditional support that Hindus have given to us at this critical period of our history." I am sure that both Hindus and Muslims of those days are the same today that they were then. But times have changed and with them have changed our manners. I have no shadow of a doubt that our hearts will meet some day. What seems impossible today for us God will make possible tomorrow. For that day I work, live and pray.

CWMG Vol. 70: Pp. 213-14

## MY DREAM

*B*efore I ever knew anything of politics in my early youth, I dreamt the dream of communal unity of the heart. I shall jump in the evening of my life, like a child, to feel that the dream has been realized in this life. The wish for living the full span of life portrayed by the seers of old and which they permit us to set down at 125 years, will then revive. Who would not risk sacrificing his life for the realization of such a dream? Then we shall have real Swaraj. Then though legally and geographically we may still be two states, in daily life no one will think that we were separate states. The vista before me seems to me to be, as it must be to you, too glorious to be true. Yet like a child in a famous picture, drawn by a famous painter, I shall not be happy till I have got it. I live and want to live for no lesser goal. Let the seekers from Pakistan help me to come as near the goal as it is humanly possible. A goal ceases to be one, when it is reached. The nearest approach is always possible. What I have said holds good irrespective of whether others do it or not. It is open to every individual to purify himself or herself so as to render him or her fit for that land of promise. I remember to have read, I forget whether in the Delhi Fort or the Agra Fort, when I visited them in 1896, a verse on one of the gates, which when translated reads: 'If there is paradise on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here.' That Fort with all its magnificence at its best, was no

paradise in my estimation. But I should love to see that verse with justice inscribed on the gates of Pakistan at all the entrances. In such paradise, whether it is in the Union or in Pakistan, there will be neither paupers nor beggars, nor high nor low, neither millionaire employers nor half-starved employees, nor intoxicating drinks or drugs. There will be the same respect for women as vouchsafed to men and the chastity and purity of men and women will be jealously guarded. Where every woman except one's wife, will be treated by men of all religions, as mother, sister or daughter according to her age. Where there will be no untouchability and where there will be equal respect for all faiths. They will be all proudly, joyously and voluntarily bred labourers. I hope everyone who listens to me or reads these lines will forgive me if stretched on my bed and basking in the sun, inhaling life giving sunshine, I allow myself to indulge in this ecstasy. Let this assure the doubters and sceptics that I have not the slightest desire that the fast should be ended as quickly as possible. It matters little if the ecstatic wishes of a fool like me are never realized and the fast is never broken. I am content to wait as long as it may be necessary, but it will hurt me to think that people have acted merely in order to save me. I claim that God has inspired this fast and it will be broken only when and if He wishes it. No human agency has ever been known to thwart, nor will it ever thwart Divine will.

*Harijan*, 18-1-1948; Pp. 526

## OUR ECONOMY

*O*f course, industrialism is like a force of Nature, but it is given to man to control Nature and to conquer her forces. His dignity demands from him resolution in the face of overwhelming odds. Our daily life is such a conquest. An agriculturist knows it only too well.

What is industrialism but a control of the majority by a small minority? There is nothing attractive about it, nor is there anything inevitable in it. If the majority simply will say 'no' to the blandishments of the minority, the latter is powerless for mischief.

It is good to have faith in human nature. I live because I have that faith. But that faith does not blind me to the fact of history, that, whilst in the ultimate all is well, individuals and groups called nations have before now perished. Rome, Greece, Babylon, Egypt and many others are a standing testimony in proof of the fact that nations have perished before now because of their misdeeds. What may be hoped

for is that Europe, on account of her fine and scientific intellect, will realize the obvious and retrace her steps, and from the demoralizing industrialism she will find a way out. It will not necessarily be a return to the old absolute simplicity. But it will have to be a reorganization in which village life will predominate, and in which brute and material force will be subordinated to the spiritual force. Lastly, we must not be entrapped by false analogies. European writers are handicapped for want of experience and accurate information. They cannot guide us beyond a certain measure if they have to generalize from European examples which cannot be on all fours with Indian conditions, because in Europe they have nothing like the conditions of India, not even excluding Russia. What may be, therefore, true of Europe is not necessarily true of India. We know, too, that each nation has its own characteristics and individuality. India has her own; and if we are to find out a true solution for her many ills, we shall have to take all the idiosyncrasies of her constitution into account, and then prescribe a remedy. I claim that to industrialize India in the same sense as Europe, is to attempt the impossible. India has stood many a storm. Each has left its own indelible mark it is true, but she has hitherto dauntlessly maintained her individuality. India is one of the few nations of the earth which have witnessed the fall of many civilizations, herself remaining scatheless. India is one of the few nations on the earth which have retained some of their ancient institutions although they have been overlaid with superstition and error. But she has hitherto shown an inherent capacity for purging herself of error and superstition. My faith in her ability to solve the economic problem that faces her millions has never been so bright as it is today, especially after my study of the conditions in Bengal.

CWMG Vol. 28: Pp. 31-32

## CURSE OF INDUSTRIALISM

*S* industrialism is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors. It is because these factors are getting less and less every day for England that its number of unemployed is mounting up daily. The Indian boycott was but a flea-bite. And if that is the state of England, a vast country like India cannot expect to benefit by industrialization. In fact, India, when it begins to exploit other nations—as it must if it



becomes industrialized—will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world. And why should I think of industrializing India to exploit other nations? Don't you see the tragedy of the situation, viz., that we can find work for our 300 millions unemployed, but England can find none for its three millions and is faced with a problem that baffles the greatest intellects of England? The future of industrialism is dark. England has got successful competitors in America, Japan, France and Germany. It has competitors in the handful of mills in India, and as there has been an awakening in India, even so there will be an awakening in South Africa with its vastly richer resources—natural, mineral and human. The mighty English look quite pigmies before the mighty races of Africa. They are noble savages after all, you will say. They are certainly noble, but no savages and in the course of a few years the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?

CWMG Vol. 48: Pp. 224-25

## NO CLASS WAR

*B*y the non-violent method we seek not to destroy the capitalist, we seek to destroy capitalism. We invite the capitalist to regard himself as trustee for those on whom he depends for the making, the retention and the increase of his capital. Nor need the worker wait for his conversion. If capital is power, so is work. Either power can be used destructively or creatively. Either is dependent on the other. Immediately the worker realizes his strength, he is in a position to become a co-sharer with the capitalist instead of remaining his slave. If he aims at becoming the sole owner, he will most likely be killing the hen that lays golden eggs. Inequalities in intelligence and even opportunity will last till the end of time. A man living on the banks of a river has any day more opportunity of growing crops than one living in an arid desert. But if inequalities stare us in the face the essential equality too is not to be missed. Every man has an equal right to the necessities of life even as birds and beasts have. And since every right carries with it a corresponding duty and the corresponding remedy for resisting any attack upon it, it is merely a matter of finding out the corresponding duties and remedies to vindicate the elementary fundamental equality. The corresponding duty is to labour with my limbs and the corresponding remedy is to non-co-operate with him

who deprives me of the fruit of my labour. And if I would recognize the fundamental equality, as I must, of the capitalist and the labourer, I must not aim at his destruction. I must strive for his conversion. My non-co-operation with him will open his eyes to the wrong he may be doing. Nor need I be afraid of someone else taking my place when I have non-co-operated. For I expect to influence my co-workers so as not to help the wrongdoing of employer. This kind of education of the mass of workers is no doubt a slow process, but as it is also the surest, it is necessarily the quickest. It can be easily demonstrated that destruction of the capitalist must mean destruction in the end of the worker and as no human being is so bad as to be beyond redemption, no human being is so perfect as to warrant his destroying him whom he wrongly considers to be wholly evil.

CWMG Vol. 45; Pp. 339-40

## SOCIALISM

Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware in socialism all the members of society are equal—none low, none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.

In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity. Looking at society all the world over there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high, that one is low, that is a Hindu, that a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these there are subdivisions. In the unity of my conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs.

In order to reach his state we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our life we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawk-like seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us.

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will account for ten and

every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. Non-violence is embedded in truth and *vice versa*. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.

Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above the existence of such a society is impossible.

*Harijan*, 13-7-1947; Pp. 232

## SOCIALISM AND SATYAGRAHA

Truth and ahimsa must incarnate in socialism. In order that they can, the votary must have a living faith in God. Mere mechanical adherence to truth and ahimsa is likely to break down at the critical moment. Hence have I said that truth is God. This God is a living Force. Our life is of that Force. That Force resides in, but is not the body. He who denies the existence of that great Force, denies to himself the use of that inexhaustible Power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship which, tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway. The socialism of such takes them nowhere, what to say of the society in which they live. If such be the case, does it mean that no socialist believes in God? If there be any, why have they not made any visible progress? Then again, many godly persons have lived before now; why have they not succeeded in founding a socialistic state?

It is difficult completely to silence these two doubts. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that it has perhaps never occurred to a believing socialist that there is any connection between his socialism and belief in God. It is equally safe to say that godly men as a rule never commended socialism to the masses.

Superstitions have flourished in the world in spite of godly men and women. In Hinduism itself untouchability has, till of late, held undoubted sway.

The fact is that it has always been a matter of strenuous research to know this great Force and its hidden possibilities.

My claim is that in the pursuit of that search lies the discovery of *satyagraha*. It is not, however, claimed that all the laws of *satyagraha* have been laid down or found. This I do say, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of *satyagraha*. It is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force: Socialism will not be reached by any other means. *Satyagraha* can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.

*Harijan*, 20-7-1947; Pp. 240

## BRAHMACHARYA AND NON-VIOLENCE

But there is no such thing as compulsion in the scheme of non-violence. Reliance has to be placed upon ability to reach the intellect and the heart—the latter rather than the former.

It follows that there must be power in the word of a *satyagraha* general—not the power that the possession of limitless arms gives, but the power that purity of life, strict vigilance, and ceaseless application produce. This is impossible without the observance of *brahmacharya*. It must be as full as it is humanly possible. *Brahmacharya* here does not mean mere physical self-control. It means much more. It means complete control over all the senses. Thus an impure thought is a breach of *brahmacharya*; so is anger. All power comes from the preservation and sublimation of the vitality that is responsible for creation of life. If the vitality is husbanded instead of being dissipated, it is transmuted into creative energy of the highest order. This vitality is continuously and even unconsciously dissipated by evil, or even ambling, disorderly, unwanted thoughts. And since thought is the root of all speech and action, the quality of the latter corresponds to that of the former. Hence

perfectly controlled thought is itself power of the highest potency and can become self-acting. That seems to me to be the meaning of the silent prayer of the heart. If man is after the image of God, he had but to will a thing in the limited sphere allotted to him and it becomes. Such power is impossible in one who dissipates his energy in any way whatsoever, even as steam kept in a leaky pipe yields no power. The sexual act divorced from the deliberate purpose of generation is a typical and gross form of dissipation and has therefore been specially and rightly chosen for condemnation. But in one who has to organize vast masses of mankind for nonviolent action the full control described by me has to be attempted and virtually achieved.

This control is unattainable save by the grace of God. There is a verse in the second chapter of *Gita* which freely rendered means: "Sense effects remain in abeyance whilst one is fasting or whilst the particular sense is starved, but the hankering does not cease except when one sees God face to face"<sup>1</sup> This control is not mechanical or temporary. Once attained it is never lost. In that state vital energy is stored up without any chance of escaping by the innumerable outlets.

It has been said that such *brahmacharya*, if it is at all attainable, can be so only by cave-dwellers. A *brahmachari*, it is said, should never see, much less touch a woman. Doubtless a *brahmachari* may not think of, speak of, see or touch a woman lustfully. But the prohibition one finds in books on *brahmacharya* is mentioned without the important adverb. The reason for the omission seems to be that man is no important judge in such matters, and therefore cannot say when he is or is not affected by such contacts. Cupid's visitations are often unperceivable. Difficult though therefore *brahmacharya* is of observance when one freely mixes with the world, it is not of much value if it is attainable only by retirement from the world.

Anyway, I have practised *brahmacharya* for over thirty years with considerable success though living in the midst of activities. After the decision to lead the life of a *brahmachari* there was little change in my outward practice, except with my wife. In the course of my work among the Indians in South Africa, I mixed freely with women. There was hardly an Indian woman in Transvaal and Natal whom I did not know. They were so many sisters and daughters to me. My *brahmacharya* was not derived from books. I evolved my own rules for my guidance and that of those who, at my invitation, had joined me in the experiment. If I have not followed the prescribed restrictions, much less have I accepted the descriptions found even in religious literature, of woman as the source of all evil and temptation. Owing as I do all the good there may be in me to my mother, I have looked upon woman never as an object for satisfaction of sexual desire but always with the veneration due to my own mother. Man is the tempter and aggressor. It is not woman whose

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<sup>1</sup>Bhagavad Gita, II. 59

touch defiles man but he is often himself too impure to touch her. But recently a doubt has seized me as to the nature of the limitation that a *brahmachari* or *brahmacharini* should put upon himself or herself regarding contacts with the opposite sex. I have set limitations which do not satisfy me. What they should be I do not know. I am experimenting. I have never claimed to have been a perfect *brahmachari* of my definition. I have not acquired that control over my thoughts that I need for my researches in non-violence. If my non-violence is to be contagious and infectious, I must acquire greater control over my thoughts. There is perhaps a flaw somewhere which accounts for the apparent failure of leadership adverted to in the opening sentence of this writing.

My faith in non-violence remains as strong as ever. I am quite sure that not only should it answer all our requirements in our country, but that it should, if properly applied, prevent the bloodshed that is going on outside India and is threatening to overwhelm the Western world.

My aspiration is limited. God has not given me the power to guide the world on the path of non-violence. But I have imagined that He has chosen me as His instrument for presenting non-violence to India for dealing with her many ills. The progress already made is great. But much more remains to be done.

CWMG Vol. 67; Pp. 195-97

## BIRTH CONTROL

It is not without the greatest hesitation and reluctance that I approach the subject. The question of using artificial methods for birth control has been referred to me by correspondents ever since my return to India. Though I have answered them personally, I have never hitherto dealt with the subject publicly. My attention was drawn to the subject, now thirty-five years ago, when I was a student in England. There was then a hot controversy raging between a purist who would not countenance anything but natural means and a doctor who advocated artificial means. It was at that early time in my life that I became, after leanings for a brief period towards artificial means, a convinced opponent of them. I now observe that in some Hindi papers the methods are described in a revoltingly open manner which shocks one's sense of decency. I observe, too, that one writer does not hesitate to cite my name as among the supporters of artificial methods of birth

control. I cannot recall a single occasion when I spoke or wrote in favour of such methods. I have seen also two distinguished names having been used in support. I hesitate to publish them without reference to their owners.

There can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth control. But the only method handed down from ages past is self-control or *brahmacharya*. It is an infallible sovereign remedy doing good to those who practise it. And medical men will earn the gratitude of mankind, if instead of devising artificial means of birth control they will find out the means of self-control. The union is meant not for pleasure but for bringing forth progeny. And union is a crime when the desire for progeny is absent.

Artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make men and women reckless. And respectability that is being given to the methods must hasten the dissolution of the restraints that public opinion puts upon one. Adoption of artificial methods must result in imbecility and nervous prostration. The remedy will be found to be worse than the disease. It is wrong and immoral to seek to escape the consequences of one's acts. It is good for a person who overeats to have an ache and a fast. It is bad for him to indulge his appetite and then escape the consequence by taking tonic or other medicine. It is still worse for a person to indulge in his animal passions and escape the consequences of his acts. Nature is relentless and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws. Moral results can only be produced by moral restraints. All other restraints defeat the very purpose for which they are intended. The reasoning underlying the use of artificial methods is that indulgence is a necessity of life. Nothing can be more fallacious. Let those who are eager to see the births regulated explore the lawful means devised by the ancients and try to find out how they can be revived. An enormous amount of spade-work lies in front of them. Early marriages are fruitful source of adding to the population. The present mode of life has also a great deal to do with the evil of unchecked procreation. If these causes are investigated and dealt with, society will be morally elevated. If they are ignored by impatient zealots and if artificial methods become the order of the day, nothing but moral degradation can be the result. A society that has already become enervated through a variety of causes will become still further enervated by the adoption of artificial methods. Those men therefore who are light-heartedly advocating artificial methods cannot do better than study the subject afresh, stay their injurious activity and popularize *brahmacharya* both for the married and the unmarried. That is the only noble and straight method of birth control.

## GOD IS GOOD

*N*ot in the same sense as X is good. X is comparatively good. He is more good than evil, but God is wholly good. There is no evil in Him. God made man in His own image. Unfortunately for us man has fashioned Him in his own. This arrogation has landed mankind in a sea of troubles. God is the Supreme Alchemist. In His presence all iron and dross turn into pure gold. Similarly does all evil turn into good.

Again God lives but not as we. His creatures live but to die. But God is Life. Therefore, goodness and all it connotes is not an attribute. Goodness is God. Goodness conceived as apart from Him is a lifeless thing and exists only whilst it is a paying policy. So are all morals. If they are to live in us they must be considered and cultivated in their relation to God. We try to become good because we want to reach and realize God. All the dry ethics of the world turn to dust because apart from God they are lifeless. Coming from God, they come with life in them. They become part of us and ennoble us.

Conversely, God conceived without Goodness is without life. We give Him life in our vain imaginings.

*Harijan*, 24-8-1947; Pp. 289

## BROADCAST TO AMERICA<sup>1</sup>

*I*n my opinion, the Indian Conference bears in its consequence not only upon India but upon the whole world. India is by itself almost a continent. It contains one fifth of the human race. It represents one of the most ancient civilizations. It has traditions handed down from tens of thousands of years, some of which, to the astonishment of the world, remain intact. No doubt the ravages of time have affected the purity of that civilization, as they have that of many other cultures and many institutions.

If India is to perpetuate the glory of her ancient past, it can do so only when it attains freedom. The reason for the struggle having

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<sup>1</sup> The broadcast was made on the Columbia Broadcasting Service network from Kingsley Hall on September 13, 1931. According to Louis Fischer's *Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, before beginning his unprepared address, Gandhiji said: "Do I have to speak into that?" After the address was over, he remarked: "Well, that's over." Those words also were heard by the listeners.



drawn the attention of the world, I know, does not lie in the fact that we Indians are fighting for our liberty, but in the fact that the means adopted by us for attaining that liberty are unique and as far as history shows us, have not been adopted by any other people of whom we have any record.

The means adopted are not violence, not bloodshed, not diplomacy as one understands it nowadays, but they are purely and simply truth and non-violence. No wonder that the attention of the world is directed towards this attempt to lead a successful, bloodless revolution. Hitherto, nations have fought in the manner of the brute. They have wreaked vengeance upon those whom they have considered to be their enemies.

We find in searching national anthems adopted by great nations that they contain imprecations upon the so-called enemy. They have vowed destruction and have not hesitated to take the name of God and seek Divine assistance for the destruction of the enemy. We in India have reversed the process. We feel that the law that governs brute creation is not the law that should guide the human race. That law is inconsistent with human dignity.

I, personally, would wait, if need be, for ages rather than seek to attain the freedom of my country through bloody means. I feel in the innermost recesses of my heart, after a political experience extending over an unbroken period of close upon thirty-five years, that the world is sick unto death of blood-spilling. The world is seeking a way out, and flatter myself with the belief that perhaps it will be the privilege of the ancient land of India to show that way out to the hungering world.

I have, therefore, no hesitation whatsoever in inviting all the great nations of the earth to give their hearty co-operation to India in her mighty struggle. It must be a sight worth contemplating and treasuring that millions of people have given themselves to suffering without retaliation in order that they might vindicate the dignity and honour of the nation.

I have called that suffering a process of self-purification. It is my conviction that no man loses his freedom except through his own weakness. I am painfully conscious of our own weaknesses. We represent in India all the principal religions of the earth, and it is a matter of deep humiliation to confess that we are a house divided against itself; that we Hindus and Mussalmans are flying at one another. It is a matter of still deeper humiliation to me that we Hindus regard several millions of our own kith and kin as too degraded even for our touch. I refer to the so-called "untouchables."

These are no small weaknesses in a nation struggling to be free. You will find that, in this struggle through self-purification, we have assigned a foremost part of our creed to the removal of this curse of untouchability and the attainment of unity amongst all the different classes and communities of India representing the different creeds.

It is along the same lines that we seek to rid our land of the curse of drink. Happily for us, intoxicating drinks and drugs are confined to comparatively a very small number of people, largely factory hands and the like.

Fortunately for us, the drink and drug curse is accepted as a curse. It is not considered to be the fashion for men or women to drink or to take intoxicating drugs. All the same, it is an uphill fight that we are fighting in trying to remove this evil from our midst.

It is a matter of regret, deep regret, for me to have to say that the existing Government has made of this evil a source of very large revenue, amounting to nearly twenty-five crores of rupees. But I am thankful to be able to say that the women of India have risen to the occasion in combating it by peaceful means, that is, by a fervent appeal to those who are given to the drink habit to give it up, and by an equally fervent appeal to the liquor-dealers. A great impression has been created upon those who are addicted to these two evil habits. I wish that it were possible for me to say that in this, at least, we were receiving hearty co-operation of the rulers. If we could only have received the co-operation without any legislation, I dare say that we would have achieved this reform and banished intoxicating drinks and drugs from our afflicted land.

There is a force which has a constructive effect and which has been put forth by the nation during this struggle. That is the great care for the semi-starved millions scattered throughout the 700,000 villages dotted over a surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad. It is a painful phenomenon that these simple villagers, through no fault of their own, have nearly six months of the year idle upon their hands.

The time was not very long ago when every village was self-sufficient in regard to the two primary human wants: food and clothing. Unfortunately for us, the East India Company, by means I would prefer not to describe, destroyed that supplementary village industry, and the millions of spinners who had become famous through the cunning of their deft fingers for drawing the finest thread, such as has never yet been drawn by any modern machinery. These village spinners found themselves one fine morning with their noble occupation gone. From that day forward India has become progressively

poor. No matter what may be said to the contrary, it is a historical fact that, before the advent of the East India Company, these villagers were not idle, and he who wants may see today that these villagers are idle. It, therefore, required no great effort or learning to know that these villagers must starve if they cannot work for six months in the year. May I not, then, on behalf of these semi-starved millions, appeal to the conscience of the world to come to the rescue of a people dying for regaining its liberty?

CWMG Vol. 48; Pp. 8-10

## RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

*T*he need of the moment is not one religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of the different religions. We want to reach not the dead level, but unity in diversity. Any attempt to root out traditions, effects of heredity, climate and other surroundings is not only bound to fail, but is a sacrilege. The soul of religions is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms. The latter will persist to the end of time. Wise men will ignore the outward crust and see the same soul living under a variety of crusts. For Hindus to expect Islam, Christianity or Zoroastrianism to be driven out of India is as idle a dream as it would be for Mussalmans to have only Islam of their imagination rule the world. But if belief in one God and the race of His Prophets in a never-ending chain is sufficient for Islam, then we are all Mussalmans, but we are also all Hindus and Christians. Truth is the exclusive property of no simple scripture.

CWMG Vol. 25; Pp. 179-80

## SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF INDIA

*I*ndia of the near future stands for perfect toleration of all religions. Her spiritual heritage is simple living and high thinking. I consider Western Christianity in its practical working a negation of Christ's Christianity. I cannot conceive Jesus, if he was living in the flesh in our midst, approving of modern Christian organizations, public worship

or modern ministry. If Indian Christians will simply cling to *The Sermon on the Mount* which was delivered not merely to the peaceful disciples but a groaning world, they would not go wrong, and they would find that no religion is false, and that if they act according to their lights and in the fear of God, they would not need to worry about organizations, forms of worship and ministry. The Pharisees had all that, but Jesus would have none of it, for they were using their office as a cloak for hypocrisy and worse. Co-operation with forces of God and non-co-operation with forces of Evil are the two things we need for a good and pure life, whether it is called Hindu, Muslim or Christian.

(WMG Vol 21; Pp. 169)

## THE LAW AND RELIGIOUS NEUTRALITY

*R*eligious neutrality means that the State will have no State religion nor a system of favouritism. There will be no untouchability. The 'untouchables' will have same rights as any other. But a Brahmin will not be made to touch anybody. He will be free to make himself untouchable and have his own well, his own temple, his own school and whatever else he can afford, so long as he uses these things without being a nuisance to his neighbours. But he will not be able, as some do now, to punish untouchables for daring to walk on public streets or using public wells. There will be under Swaraj no such scandal as that of the use of public temples being denied to untouchables when it is allowed to all other Hindus. The authority of the Vedas and the other Shastras will not be denied but their interpretation will not rest with individuals but will depend upon the courts of law in so far as these religious books will be used to regulate public conduct. Conscientious scruples will be respected, but not at the expense of public morals or the rights of others. Those who will have extraordinary scruples will have themselves to suffer inconvenience and pay for the luxury. The law will not tolerate any arrogation of superiority by any person or class whether in the name of custom or religion. But all this is my dream.

CWMG Vol. 46; Pp. 363

## ESSENCE OF GITA

*T*he object of the *Gita* appears to me to be that of showing the most excellent way to attain self-realization. That which is to be found, more or less clearly, spread out here and there in Hindu religious books, has been brought out in the clearest possible language in the *Gita* even at the risk of repetition.

- ...14. That matchless remedy is renunciation of fruits of action.
15. This is the centre round which the *Gita* is woven. This renunciation is the central sun, round which devotion, knowledge and the rest revolve like planets. The body has been likened to a prison. There must be action where there is body. Not one embodied being is exempted from labour. And yet all religions proclaim that it is possible for man, by treating the body as the temple of God, to attain freedom. Every action is tainted, be it ever so trivial. How can the body be made the temple of God? In other words how can one be free from action, i.e., from the taint of sin? The *Gita* has answered the question in decisive language: "By desireless action; by renouncing fruits of action; by dedicating all activities to God, i.e., by surrendering oneself to Him body and soul."
16. But desirelessness or renunciation does not come from the mere talking about it. It is not attained by an intellectual feat. It is attainable only by a constant heart-churn. Right knowledge is necessary for attaining renunciation. Learned men possess a knowledge of a kind. They may recite the Vedas from memory, yet they may be steeped in self-indulgence. In order that knowledge may not run riot, the author of the *Gita* has insisted on devotion accompanying it and has given it the first place. Knowledge without devotion will be like a misfire. Therefore, says the *Gita*: "Have devotion, and knowledge will follow." This devotion is not mere lip-worship, it is a wrestling with death. Hence the *Gita's* assessment of the devotee's qualities is similar to that of the sages.
17. Thus devotion required by the *Gita* is no soft-hearted effusiveness. It certainly is not blind faith. The devotion of the *Gita* has the last to do with externals. A devotee may use, if he likes rosaries, forehead marks, make offerings, but these things are not test of his devotion. He is the devotee who is jealous of none, who is a fount of mercy, who is without egotism, who is selfless, who treats alike cold and heat, happiness and misery, who is ever forgiving, who is always contented, whose

resolutions are firm, who has dedicated mind and soul to God, who causes no dread, who is not afraid of others, who is free from exultation, sorrow and fear, who is pure, who is versed in action and yet remains unaffected by it, who renounces all fruit, good or bad, who treats friend and foe alike, who is untouched by respect or disrespect, who is not puffed up by praise, who does not go under when people speak ill of him, who loves silence and solitude, who has a disciplined reason. Such devotion is inconsistent with the existence at the same time of strong attachments.

18. We thus see, that to be a real devotee is to realize oneself. Self realization is not something apart. One rupee can purchase for us poison or nectar, but knowledge or devotion cannot buy us either salvation or bondage. These are not media of exchange. They are themselves the things we want. In other words, if the means and the end are not identical, they are almost so. The extreme of means is salvation. Salvation of the *Gita* is perfect peace.
19. But such knowledge and devotion, to be true, have to stand the test of renunciation of fruits of action. Mere knowledge of right and wrong will not make one fit for salvation. According to common notions a mere learned man will pass as a pundit. He need not perform any service. He will regard it as bondage even to lift a little *lota*. Where one test of knowledge is non-liability for service, there is no room for such mundane work as the lifting of a *lota*.
20. Or take *bhakti*. The popular notion of *bhakti* is softheartedness, telling beads and the like, and disdaining to do even a loving service, lest the telling of beads, etc., might be interrupted. The *bhakta* therefore leaves the rosary only for eating, drinking and like, never for grinding corn or nursing patients.
21. But the *Gita* says: "No one has attained his goal without action. Even men like Janaka attained salvation through action. If even I were lazily to cease working, the world would perish. How much more necessary then for the people at large to engage in action?"
22. While on the one hand it is beyond dispute that all action binds, on the other hand it is equally true that all living beings have to do some work, whether they will or not. Here all activity, whether mental or physical, is to be included in the term action. Then how is one to be free from the bondage of action, even

though he may be acting? The manner in which the *Gita* has solved the problem is, to my knowledge, unique. The *Gita* says: "Do your allotted work but renounce its fruit—be detached and work—have no desire for reward, and work."

This is the unmistakable teaching of the *Gita*. He who gives up action falls. He who gives up only the reward rises. But renunciation of fruit in no way means indifference to the result. In regard to every action one must know the result that is expected to follow, the means thereto, and the capacity for it. He, who, being thus equipped, is without desire for the result, and is yet wholly engrossed in the due fulfilment of the task before him, is said to have renounced the fruits of his action.

23. Again, let no one consider renunciation to mean want of fruit for the renouncer. The *Gita* reading does not warrant such a meaning. Renunciation means absence of hankering after fruit. As a matter of fact, he who renounces reaps a thousandfold. The renunciation of the *Gita* is the acid test of faith. He who is ever brooding over the result often loses nerve in the performance of his duty. He becomes impatient and then gives vent to anger and begins to do unworthy things; he jumps from action to action, never remaining faithful to any. He who broods over results is like a man given to objects of senses; he is ever distracted, he says goodbye to all scruples, everything is right in his estimation and he therefore resorts to means fair and foul to attain his end.
24. From the bitter experience of desire for fruit the author of the *Gita* discovered the path of renunciation of fruit, and put it before the world in a most convincing manner. The common belief is that religion is always opposed to material good. "One cannot act religiously in mercantile and such other matters. There is no place for religion in such pursuits; religion is only for attainment of salvation," we hear many worldly-wise people say. In my opinion the author of the *Gita* has delusion. He has drawn no line of demarcation between salvation and worldly pursuits. On the contrary, he has shown that religion must rule even our worldly pursuits. I have felt that *Gita* teaches us that what cannot be followed out in day-to-day practice cannot be called religion. Thus, according to the *Gita*, all acts that are incapable of being performed without attachment are taboo. This golden rule saves mankind from many a pitfall. According to this interpretation, murder, lying, dissoluteness and the like

must be regarded as sinful and therefore taboo. Man's life then becomes simple, and from that simpleness springs peace.

25. Thinking along these lines, I have felt that in trying to enforce in one's life the central teaching of the *Gita*, one is bound to follow truth and ahimsa. When there is no desire for fruit, there is no temptation for untruth or *himsa*. Take any instance of untruth or violence, and it will be found that at its back was the desire to attain the cherished end. But it may be freely admitted that the *Gita* was not written to establish *ahimsa*. It was an accepted and primary duty even before the *Gita* age. The *Gita* had to deliver the message of renunciation of fruit. This is clearly brought out as early as the second chapter.
26. But if the *Gita* believed in *ahimsa* or it was included in desirelessness, why did the author take a warlike illustration? When the *Gita* was written, although people believed in *ahimsa*, wars were not only not taboo, but nobody observed the contradiction between them and *ahimsa*.
27. In assessing the implications of renunciation of fruit, we are not required to probe the mind of the author of the *Gita* as to his limitations of *ahimsa* and the like. Because a poet puts a particular truth before the world, it does not necessarily follow that he has known or worked out all its great consequences, or that having done so, he is able to express them fully. In this perhaps lies the greatness of the poem and the poet. A poet's meaning is limitless. Like man, the meaning of great writings suffers evolution. On examining the history of languages, we notice that the meaning of important words has changed or expanded. This is true of the *Gita*. The author has himself extended the meanings of some of the current words. We are able to discover this even on a superficial examination. It is possible that, in the age prior to that of the *Gita*, offering of animals in sacrifice was permissible. But there is not a trace of it in the sacrifice in the *Gita* sense. In the *Gita* continuous concentration on God is the king of sacrifices. The third chapter seems to show that sacrifice chiefly means body-labour for service. The third and the fourth chapters read together will give us other meanings for sacrifice, but never animal-sacrifice. Similarly has the meaning of the word *sannyasa* undergone, in the *Gita*, a transformation. The *sannyasa* of the *Gita* will not tolerate complete cessation of all activity. The *sannyasa* of the *Gita* is all work and yet no work. Thus the author of the



*Gita*, by extending meanings of words, has taught us to imitate him. Let it be granted, that according to the letter of the *Gita* it is possible to say that warfare is consistent with renunciation of fruit. But after 40 years' unremitting endeavour fully to enforce the teaching of the *Gita* in my own life, I have, in all humility, felt that perfect renunciation is impossible without perfect observance of ahimsa in every shape and form.

**SRI AUROBINDO**

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## KARMA

ONE FINDS AN UNANSWERABLE truth in the theory of Karma—not necessarily in the form the ancients gave to it, but in the idea at its centre—which at once strikes the mind and commands the assent of the understanding. Nor does the austerer reason, distrustful of first impressions and critical of plausible solutions, find after the severest scrutiny that the more superficial understanding, the porter at the gateways of our mentality, has been deceived into admitting a tinsel guest, a false claimant into our mansion of knowledge. There is a solidity at once of philosophic and of practical truth supporting the idea, a bed-rock of the deepest universal undeniable verities against which the human mind must always come up in its fathomings of the fathomless; in this way indeed does the world deal with us, there is a law here which does so make itself felt and against which all our egoistic ignorance and self-will and violence dashes up in the end, as the old Greek poet said of the haughty insolence and prosperous pride of man, against the very foundation of the throne of Zeus, the marble feet of Themis, the adamantine best of Ananke. There is the secret of an eternal factor, the base of the unchanging action of the just and truthful gods, *devanam dhruva-vratani*, in the self-sufficient and impartial law of Karma.

This truth of Karma has been always recognized in the East in one form or else in another; but to the Buddhists belongs the credit of having given to it the clearest and fullest universal enunciation and the most insistent importance. In the West, too, the idea has constantly recurred, but in external, in fragmentary glimpses, as the recognition of a pragmatic truth of experience, and mostly as an ordered ethical law or fatality set over against the self-will and strength of man: but it was clouded over by other ideas inconsistent with any reign of law, vague ideas of some superior caprice or of some divine jealousy—that was a notion of the Greeks—a blind Fate or inscrutable Necessity, Ananke, or, later, the mysterious ways of an arbitrary, through no doubt an all-wise Providence. And all this meant that there was some

broken half-glimpse of the working of a force, but the law of its working and the nature of the thing itself escaped the perception—as indeed it could hardly fail to do, since the mental eye of the West, absorbed by the passion of life, tried to read the workings of the universe in the light of the single mind and life of man; but those workings are much too vast, ancient, unbrokenly continuous in Time and all-pervading in Space—not in material infinity alone, but in the eternal time and eternal space of the soul's infinity—to be read by so fragmentary a glimmer. Since the Eastern idea and name of the law of Karma was made familiar to the modern mentality, one side of it has received an increasing recognition, perhaps because latterly that mentality had been prepared by the great discoveries and generalisations of Science for a fuller vision of cosmic existence and a more ordered and majestic idea of cosmic Law. It may be as well then to start from the physical base in approaching this question of Karma, though we may find at last that it is from the other end of being, from its spiritual summit rather than its material support that we must look in order to catch its whole significance—and to fix also the limits of its significance.

Fundamentally, the meaning of Karma is that all existence is the working of a universal Energy, a process and an action and a building of things by that action—an unbuilding too, but as a step to farther building—that all is a continuous chain in which every one link is bound indissolubly to the past infinity of numberless links, and the whole governed by fixed relations, by a fixed association of cause and effect, present action the result of past action as future action will be the result of present action, all cause a working of energy and all effect too a working of energy. The moral significance is that all our existence is a putting out of an energy which is in us and by which we are made and as is the nature of the energy which is put forth as cause, so shall be that of the energy which returns as effect, that this is the universal law and nothing in the world can, being of and in our world, escape from its governing incidence. That is the philosophical reality of the theory of Karma, and that too is the way of seeing which has been developed by physical Science. But its seeing has been handicapped in the progress to the full largeness of its own truth by two persistent errors, first, the strenuous paradoxical attempt—inevitable and useful no doubt as one experiment of the human reason which had to have its opportunity, but foredoomed to failure—to explain supra-physical things by a physical formula, and a darkening second error of setting behind the universal rule of Law and as its cause and efficient the quite opposite idea of the cosmic reign of Chance. The old notion of an unintelligible supreme caprice—unintelligible it must naturally be since it is the working of an unintelligent Force—

thus prolonged its reign and got admission side by side with the scientific vision of the fixities and chained successions of the universe.

Being is no doubt one, and Law too may be one ; but it is perilous to fix from the beginning on one type of phenomena with a predetermined will to deduce from that all other phenomenon however different in its significance and nature. In that way we are bound to distort truth into the mould of our own prepossession. Intermediately at least we have rather to recognize the old harmonious truth of Veda—which also came by this way in its end, its Vedanta, to the conception of the unity of Being,—that there are different planes of cosmic existence and therefore too of our own existence and in each of them the same powers, energies or laws must act in a different type and in another sense and light of their effectuality. First, then, we see that if Karma be a universal truth or the universal truth of being, it must be equally true of the inly-born mental and moral worlds of our action as in our outward relations with the physical universe. It is the mental energy that we put forth which determines the mental effect—but subject to all the impact of past, present and future surrounding circumstance, because we are not isolated powers in the world, but rather our energy a subordinate strain and thread of the universal energy. The moral energy of our action determines similarly the nature and effect of the moral consequence, but subject too—though to this element the rigid moralist does not give sufficient consideration—to the same incidence of past, present and future surrounding circumstance. That this is true of the output of physical energy, needs no saying nor any demonstration. We must recognize these different types and variously formulated motions of the one universal Force, and it will not do to say from the beginning that the measure and quality of my inner being is some result of the output of a physical energy translated into mental and moral energies—for instance, that my doing a good or a bad action or yielding to good or to bad affections and motives is at the mercy of my liver, or contained in the physical germ of my birth, or it the effect of my chemical elements or determined essentially and ultimately by the disposition of the constituent electrons of my brain and nervous system. Whatever drafts my mental and moral being may make on the corporeal for its supporting physical energy and however it may be affected by its borrowings, yet it is very evident that it uses them for other and larger purposes, has a supraphysical method, evolves much greater motives and significances. The moral energy is in itself a distinct power, has its own plane of Karma, moves me even, and that characteristically, to override my vital and physical nature. Forms of one universal Force at bottom—or at top—these may be, but in practice they are different energies and

have to be so dealt with—until we can find what that universal Force may be in its highest purest texture and initial power and whether that discovery can give us in the perplexities of our nature a unifying direction.

Chance, that vague shadow of an infinite possibility, must be banished from the dictionary of our perceptions; for of chance we can make nothing, because it is nothing. Chance does not at all exist; it is only a word by which we cover and excuse our own ignorance. Science excludes it from the actual process of physical law; everything there is determined by fixed cause and relation. But when it comes to ask why these relations exist and not others, why a particular cause is allied to a particular effect, it finds that it knows nothing whatever about the matter; every actualised possibility supposes a number of other possibilities that have not actualised but conceivably might have, and it is convenient then to say that Chance or at most a dominant probability determines all actual happening, the chance of evolution, the stumblings of a grouping inconscient energy which somehow finds out some good-enough way and fixes itself into a repetition of the process. If Inconscience can do the works of intelligence, it may not be impossible that chaotic Chance should create a universe of law ! But this is only a reading of our own ignorance into the workings of the universe—just as prescientific man read into the workings of physical law the caprices of the gods or any other name for a sportive Chance whether undivine or dressed in divine glories, whether credited with a pliant flexibility to the prayers and bribes of man or presented with an immutable Sphinx face of stone—but names only in fact for his own ignorance.

And, especially, when we come to the pressing needs of our moral and spiritual being, no theory of chance or probability will serve at all. Here Science, physical in her basis, does not help except to point out to a certain degree the effects of my physicality on my moral being or of my moral action on my physicality: for anything else of just illumination or useful purpose, she stumbles and splashes about in the quagmire of her own nescience. Earthquake and eclipse she can interpret and predict, but not my moral and spiritual becoming, but, only attempt to explain its phenomena when they have happened by imposing polysyllables and fearful and wonderful laws of pathology, morbid heredity, eugenics and what not, of loose fumbling, which touch only the dragged skirts of the lowest psycho-physical being. But here I need guidance more than anywhere else and must have the recognition of a law, the high line of a guiding order. To know the law of my moral and spiritual being is at first and last more imperative for me than to learn the ways of steam and electricity, for without these

outward advantages I can grow in my inner manhood, but not without some notion of moral and spiritual law. Action is demanded of me and I need a rule for my action: something I am urged inwardly to become which I am not yet, and I would know what is the way and law, what the central power or many conflicting powers and what the height and possible range and perfection of my becoming. That surely much more than the rule of electrons or the possibilities of a more omnipotent physical machinery and more powerful explosives is the real human question.

The Buddhists' mental and moral law of Karma comes in at this difficult point with a clue and an opening. As Science fills our mind with the idea of a universal government of Law in the physical and outward world and in our relations with Nature, though she leaves behind it all a great unanswered query, an agnosticism, a blank of some other ungrasped Infinite—here covered by the concept of Chance—the Buddhist conception too fills the spaces of our mental and moral being with the same sense of a government of mental and moral Law: but this too erects behind that Law a great unanswered query, an agnosticism, the blank of an ungrasped Infinite. But here the covering word is more grandly intangible; it is the mystery of Nirvana. This Infinite is figured in both cases by the more insistent and positive type of mind as an Inconscience—but material in the one, in the other a spiritual infinite zero—but by the more prudent or flexible thinkers simply as an unknowable. The difference is that the unknown of Science is something mechanical to which mechanically we return by physical dissolution or *laya*, but the unknown of Buddhism is a permanent beyond the Law to which we return spiritually by an effort of self-suppression, of self-renunciation and, at the latest end, of self-extinction, by a mental dissolution of the Idea which maintains the law of relations and a moral dissolution of the world-desire which keeps up the stream of successions of the universal action. This is a rare and an austere metaphysics; but to its discouraging grandeur we are by no means compelled to give assent, for it is neither self-evident nor inevitable. It is by no means so certain that a high spiritual negation of what I am is my only possible road to perfection; a high spiritual affirmation and absolute of what I am may be also a feasible way and gate. This nobly glacial or blissfully void idea of a Nirvana, because it is so overwhelmingly a negation, cannot finally satisfy the human spirit, which is drawn persistently to some highest positive and affirmation of itself and only uses negations by the way the better to rid itself of what comes in as an obstacle to its self-finding. To the everlasting No the living being may resign itself by an effort, a sorrowful or a superb turning upon itself and existence, but the everlasting Yes is its native attraction: our spiritual orientation,



the magnetism that draws the soul, is to eternal Being and not to eternal Non-Being.

Nevertheless certain essential and needed clues are there in the theory of Karma. And first, there is this assurance, this firm ground on which I can base a sure tread, that in the mental and moral world as in the physical universe there is no chaos, fortuitous rule of chance or mere probability, but an ordered Energy at work which assures its will by law and fixed relation and steady succession and the links of ascertainable cause and effectuality. To be assured that there is an all-pervading mental law and an all-pervading moral law, is a great gain, a supporting foundation. That in the mental and moral as in the physical world what I sow in the proper soil, I shall assuredly reap, is a guarantee of divine government, of equilibrium, of cosmos; it not only grounds life upon an adamant underbase of law, but by removing anarchy opens the way to a greater liberty. But there is the possibility that if this Energy is all, I may only be a creation of an imperative Force and all my acts and becomings a chain of determination over which I can have no real control or chance of mastery. That view would resolve everything into predestination of Karma, and the result might satisfy my intellect but would be disastrous to the greatness of my spirit. I should be a slave and puppet of Karma and could never dream of being a sovereign of myself and my existence. But here there comes in the second step of the theory of Karma, that it is the Idea which creates all relations. All is the expression and expansion of the Idea, *sarvani vijñan-vijrmbhitani*. Then I can by the will, the energy of the Idea in me, develop the form of what I am and arrive at the harmony of some greater idea than is expressed in my present mould and balance. I can aspire to a nobler expansion. Still, if the Idea is a thing in itself, without any base but its own spontaneous powers, none originating it, no knower, no Purusha and Lord, I may be only a form of the universal Idea and myself, my soul, may have no independent existence or initiation. But there is too this third step that I am a soul developing and persisting in the paths of the universal Energy and that in myself is the seed of all my creation. What I have become, I have made myself by the soul's past idea and action, its inner and outer Karma; what I will to be, I can make myself by present and future idea and action. And finally, there is this last supreme liberating step that both the Idea and its Karma may have their origin in the free spirit and by arriving at myself by experience and self-finding I can exalt my state beyond all bondage of Karma to spiritual freedom. These are the four pillars of the complete theory of Karma. They are also the four truths of the dealings of Self with Nature.

## THE CORE OF THE BHAGVADGITA

We know the divine Teacher, we see the human disciple; it remains to form a clear conception of the doctrine. A clear conception fastening upon the essential idea, the central heart of the teaching is especially necessary here because the Gita with its rich and many-sided thought, its synthetical grasp of different aspects of the spiritual life and the fluent winding motion of its argument lends itself, even more than other Scriptures, to one-sided misrepresentations born of a partisan intellectuality. The unconscious or half-conscious wresting of fact and word and idea to suit a preconceived notion or the doctrine or principle of one's preference is recognized by Indian logicians as one of the most fruitful sources of fallacy; and it is perhaps the one which it is most difficult for even the most conscientious thinker to avoid. For the human reason is incapable of always playing the detective upon itself in this respect; it is its very nature to seize upon some partial conclusion, idea, principle, become its partisan and make it the key to all truth, and it has an infinite faculty of doubling upon itself so as to avoid detecting in its operations this necessary and cherished weakness. The Gita lends itself easily to this kind of error, because it is easy, by throwing particular emphasis on one of its aspects or even on some salient and emphatic text and putting all the rest of the eighteen chapters into the background or making them a subordinate and auxiliary teaching, to turn it into a partisan of our own doctrine or dogma.

Thus, there are those who make the Gita teach, not works at all, but a discipline of preparation for renouncing life and works: the indifferent performance of prescribed actions or of whatever task may lie ready to the hands, becomes the means, the discipline: the final renunciation of life and works is the sole real object. It is quite easy to justify this view by citations from the book and by a certain arrangement of stress in following out its argument, especially if we shut our eyes to the peculiar way in which it uses such a word as *sannyasa*, renunciation; but it is quite impossible to persist in this view on an impartial reading in face of the continual assertion to the very end that action should be preferred to inaction and that superiority lies with the true, the inner renunciation of desire by equality and the giving up of works to the supreme Purusha.

Others again speak of the Gita as if the doctrine of devotion were its whole teaching and put in the background its monistic elements and the high place it gives to quietistic immergence in the one self of all. And undoubtedly its emphasis on devotion, its insistence on the aspect of the Divine as Lord and Purusha and its doctrine of the

Purushottama, the Supreme Being who is superior both to the mutable Being and to the Immutable and who is what in His relation to the world we know as God, are the most striking and among the most vital elements of the Gita. Still, this Lord is the Self in whom all knowledge culminates and the Master of sacrifice to whom all works lead as well as the Lord of Love into whose being the heart of devotion enters, and the Gita preserves a perfectly equal balance, emphasizing now knowledge, now works, now devotion, but for the purposes of the immediate trend of the thought, not with any absolute separate preference of one over the others. He in whom all three meet and become one, He is the Supreme Being, the Purushottama.

But at the present day, since in fact the modern mind began to recognize and deal at all with the Gita, the tendency is to subordinate its elements of knowledge and devotion, to take advantage of its continual insistence on action and to find in it a scripture of the Karmayoga, a Light leading us on the path of action, a Gospel of Works. Undoubtedly, the Gita is a Gospel of Works, but of works, which culminate in knowledge, that is, in spiritual realisation and quietude, and of works motivated by devotion, that is, a conscious surrender of one's whole self first into the hands and then into the being of the Supreme, and not at all of works as they are understood by the modern mind, not at all an action dictated by egoistic and altruistic, by personal, social, humanitarian motives, principles, ideals. Yet this is what present-day interpretations seek to make of the Gita. We are told continually by many authoritative voices that the Gita, opposing in this the ordinary ascetic and quietistic tendency of Indian thought and spirituality, proclaims with no uncertain sound the gospel of human action, the ideal of disinterested performance of social duties, nay, even, it would seem, the quite modern ideal of social service. To all this I can only reply that very patently and even on the very surface of it the Gita does nothing of the kind and that this is a modern misreading, a reading of the modern mind into an ancient book, of the present-day European or Europeanized intellect into a thoroughly antique, a thoroughly Oriental and Indian teaching. That which the Gita teaches is not a human, but a divine action; not the performance of social duties, but the abandonment of all other standards of duty or conduct for a selfless performance of the divine will working through our nature; not social service, but the action of the Best, the God-possessed, the Master-men done impersonally for the sake of the world and as a sacrifice to Him who stands behind man and Nature.

In other words, the Gita is not a book of practical ethics, but of the spiritual life. The moderneind is just now the European mind, such as it has become after having abandoned not only the philosophic idealism of the highest Graeco-Roman culture from which it started,

but the Christian devotionism of the Middle Ages; these it has replaced by or transmuted into a practical idealism and social, patriotic and philanthropic devotion. It has got rid of God or kept Him only for Sunday use and erected in His place man as its deity and society as its visible idol. At its best it is practical, ethical, social, pragmatic, altruistic, humanitarian. Now all these things are good, are especially needed at the present day, are part of the divine Will or they would not have become so dominant in humanity. Nor is there any reason why the divine man, the man who lives in the Brahmic consciousness, in the God-being should not be all of these things in his action; he will be, if they are the best ideals of the age, the Yugadharma, and there is no yet higher ideal to be established, no great radical change to be effected. For he is, as the Teacher points out to his disciple, the best who has to set the standard for others; and in fact Arjuna is called upon to live according to the highest ideals of his age and the prevailing culture, but with knowledge, with understanding of that which lay behind, and not as ordinary men, with a following of the merely outward law and rule.

But the point here is that the modern mind has exiled from its practical motive-power the two essential things, God or the Eternal and spirituality or the God-state, which are the master conceptions of the Gita. It lives in humanity only, and the Gita would have us live in God, though for the world in God; in its life, heart and intellect only, and the Gita would have us live in the spirit; in the mutable Being who is "all creatures," and the Gita would have us live also in the Immutable and the Supreme; in the changing march of Time, and the Gita would have us live in the Eternal. Or if these higher things are now beginning to be vaguely envisaged, it is only to make them subservient to man and society; but God and spirituality exist in their own right and not as adjuncts. And in practice the lower in us must learn to exist for the higher, in order that the higher also may in us consciously exist for the lower to draw it nearer to its own altitudes.

Therefore it is a mistake to interpret the Gita from the standpoint of the mentality of today and force it to teach us the disinterested performance of duty as the highest and all-sufficient law. A little consideration of the situation with which the Gita deals will show us that this could not be its meaning. For the whole point of the teaching, that from which it arises, that which compels the disciple to seek the Teacher, is an inextricable clash of the various related conceptions of duty ending in the collapse of the whole useful intellectual and moral edifice erected by the human mind. In human life some sort of a clash arises fairly often, as for instance between domestic duties and the call of the country or the cause, or between the claim of the country and the good of humanity or some larger

religious or moral principle. An inner situation may even arise, as with the Buddha, in which all duties have to be abandoned, trampled on, flung aside in order to follow the call of the Divine within. I cannot think that the Gita would solve such an inner situation by sending Buddha back to his wife and father and the Government of the Sakya State, or would direct a Ramakrishna to become a Pundit in a vernacular school and disinterestedly teach little boys their lessons, or bind down a Vivekananda to support his family and for that to follow dispassionately the law or medicine or journalism. The Gita does not teach the disinterested performance of duties but the following of the divine life, the abandonment of all Dharraas, *sarvadharmān*, to take refuge in the Supreme alone, and the divine activity of a Buddha, a Ramakrishna, a Vivekananda is perfectly in consonance with this teaching. Nay, although the Gita prefers action to inaction, it does not rule out the renunciation of works, but accepts it as one of the ways to the Divine. If that can only be attained by renouncing works and life and all duties and the call is strong within us, then into the bonfire they must go, and there is no help for it. The call of God is imperative and cannot be weighed against any other considerations.

But here there is this further difficulty that the action which Arjuna must do is one from which his moral sense recoils. It is his duty to fight, you say? But that duty has now become to his mind a terrible sin. How does it help him or solve his difficulty, to tell him that he must do his duty disinterestedly, dispassionately? He will want to know which is his duty or how it can be his duty to destroy in a sanguinary massacre his kin, his race and his country. He is told that he has right on his side, but that does not and cannot satisfy him, because his very point is that the justice of his legal claim does not justify him in supporting it by a pitiless massacre destructive to the future of his nation. Is he then to act dispassionately in the sense of not caring whether it is a sin or what its consequences may be so long as he does his duty as a soldier? That may be the teaching of a State, of politicians, of lawyers, of ethical casuists; it can never be the teaching of a great religious and philosophical Scripture which sets out to solve the problem of life and action from the very roots. And if that is what the Gita has to say on a most poignant moral and spiritual problem, we must put it out of the list of the world's Scriptures and thrust it, if anywhere, then into our library of political science and ethical casuistry.

Undoubtedly, the Gita does, like the Upanishads, teach the equality which rises above sin and virtue, beyond good and evil, but only as a part of the Brahmic consciousness and for the man who is on the path and advanced enough to fulfil the supreme rule. It does not preach indifference to good and evil for the ordinary life of man,

where such a doctrine would have the most pernicious consequences. On the contrary, it affirms that the doers of evil shall not attain to God. Therefore if Arjuna simply seeks to fulfil in the best way the ordinary law of man's life, disinterested performance of what he feels to be a sin, a thing of Hell, will not help him, even though that sin be his duty as a soldier. He must refrain from what his conscience abhors though a thousand duties were shattered to pieces.

We must remember that duty is an idea which in practice rests upon social conceptions. We may extend the term beyond its proper connotation and talk of our duty to ourselves or we may, if we like, say in a transcendent sense that it was Buddha's duty to abandon all, or even that it is the ascetic's duty to sit motionless in a cave! But this is obviously to play with words. Duty is a relative term and depends upon our relation to others. It is a father's duty, as a father, to nurture, and educate his children; a lawyer's to do his best for his client even if he knows him to be guilty and his defence to be a lie; a soldier's to fight and shoot to order even if he kills his own kin and countrymen; a judge's to send the guilty to prison and hang the murderer. And so long as these positions are accepted, the duty remains clear, a practical matter of course even when it is not a point of honour or affection, and overrides the absolute religious or moral law. But what if the inner view is changed, if the lawyer is awakened to the absolute sinfulness of falsehood, the judge becomes convinced that capital punishment is a crime against humanity, the man called upon to the battlefield feels, like the conscientious objector of today or as a Tolstoy would feel, that in no circumstances is it permissible to take human life any more than to eat human flesh? It is obvious that here the moral law which is above all relative duties must prevail; and that law depends on no social relation or conception of duty but on the awakened inner perception of man, the moral being.

There are in the world, in fact, two different laws of conduct each valid on its own plane, the rule principally dependent on external status and the rule independent of status and entirely dependent on the thought and conscience. The Gita does not teach us to subordinate the higher plane to the lower, it does not ask the awakened moral consciousness to slay itself on the altar of duty as a sacrifice and victim to the law of the social status. It calls us higher and not lower; from the conflict of the two planes it bids us ascend to a supreme poise above the mainly practical, above the purely ethical, to the Brahmic consciousness. It replaces the conception of social duty by a divine obligation. The subjection to external law gives place to a certain principle of inner self-determination of action proceeding by the soul's freedom from the tangled law of works. And this, as we shall see — the

Brahmic consciousness, the soul's freedom from works and the determination of works in the nature by the Lord within and above us—is the kernel of the Gita's teaching with regard to action.

The Gita can only be understood, like any other great work of the kind, by studying it in its entirety and as a developing argument. But the modern interpreters, starting from the great writer Bankim Chandra Chatterji who first gave to the Gita this new sense of a Gospel of Duty, have laid an almost exclusive stress on the first three or four chapters and in those on the idea of equality, on the expression *Kartavyam karma*, the work that is to be done, which they render by duty, and on the phrase "Thou hast a right to action, but none to the fruits of action" which is now popularly quoted as the great word, of *mahavakya*, of the Gita. The rest of the eighteen chapters with their high philosophy are given a secondary importance, except indeed the great vision in the eleventh. This is natural enough for the modern mind which is, or has been till yesterday, inclined to be impatient of metaphysical subtleties and far-off spiritual seekings, eager to get to work and, like Arjuna himself, mainly concerned for a workable law of works, a *dharma*. But it is the wrong way to handle this Scripture.

The equality which the Gita preaches is not disinterestedness—the great command to Arjuna given *after* the foundation and main structure of the teaching have been laid and built, "Arise, slay thy enemies, enjoy a prosperous kingdom," has not the ring of an uncompromising altruism or of a white, dispassionate abnegation; it is a state of inner poise and wideness which is the foundation of spiritual freedom. With that poise, in that freedom we have to do the "work that is to be done," a phrase which the Gita uses with the greatest wideness including in it all works, *sarvakarmani*, and which far exceeds, though it may include, social duties or ethical obligations. What is the work to be done is not to be determined by the individual choice; nor is the right to the action and the rejection of claim to the fruit the great word of the Gita, but only a preliminary word governing the first state of the disciple when he begins ascending the hill of Yoga, it is practically superseded at a subsequent stage. For the Gita goes on to affirm emphatically that the man is not the doer of the action; it is *Prakriti*, it is Nature, it is the great Force with its three modes of action that works through him, and he must learn to see that it is *not* he who does the work. Therefore the "right to action" is an idea which is only valid so long as we are still under the illusion of being the doer; it must necessarily disappear from the mind like the claim to the fruit, as soon as we cease to be to our own consciousness the doer of our works. All pragmatic egoism, whether of the claim to fruits or of the right to action, is then at an end.

But the determinism of Prakriti is not the last word of the Gita. The equality of the will and the rejection of fruits are only means for entering with the mind and the heart and the understanding into the divine consciousness and living in it; and the Gita expressly says that they are to be employed as a means as long as the disciple is unable so to live or even to seek by practice the gradual development of this higher state. And what is this Divine, whom Krishna declares himself to be? It is the Purushottama beyond the Self that acts not, beyond the Prakriti that acts, foundation of the one, master of the other, the Lord of whom all is the manifestation, who even in our present subjection to Maya sits in the heart of His creatures governing the works of Prakriti, He by whom the armies on the field of Kurukshetra have already been slain while yet they live and who uses Arjuna only as an instrument or immediate occasion of this great slaughter. Prakriti is only His executive force. The disciple has to rise beyond this Force and its three modes or *Gunas*; he has to become *trigunatita*. Not to her has he to surrender his actions, over which he has no longer any claim or "right", but into the being of the Supreme. Reposing his mind and understanding, heart and will in Him, with self-knowledge, with God-knowledge, with world-knowledge, with a perfect equality, a perfect devotion, an absolute self-giving, he has to do works as an offering to the Master of all self-energising and all sacrifice. Identified in will, conscious with that consciousness, That shall decide and initiate the action. This is the solution which the Divine Teacher offers to the disciple.

What the great, the supreme word of the Gita is, its *mahavakya*, we have not to seek; for the Gita itself declares it in its last utterance, the crowning note of the great diapason. "With the Lord in thy heart take refuge with all thy being; by His grace thou shalt attain to the supreme peace and the eternal status. So have I expounded to thee a knowledge more secret than that which is hidden. Further hear the most secret, the supreme word that I shall speak to thee. Become my-minded, devoted to Me, to Me do sacrifice and adoration; infallibly, thou shalt come to Me, for dear to Me art thou. Abandoning all laws of conduct seek refuge in Me alone. I will release thee from all sin; do not grieve."

The argument of the Gita resolves itself into three great steps by which action rises out of the human into the divine plane leaving the bondage of the lower for the liberty of a higher law. First, by the renunciation of desire and a perfect equality works have to be done as a sacrifice by man as the doer, a sacrifice to a deity who is the supreme and only Self though by him not yet realised in his own being. This is the initial step. Secondly, not only the desire of the fruit, but the claim to be the doer of works has to be renounced in the realisation of the



Self as the equal, the inactive, the immutable principle and of all works as simply the operation of universal Force, of the Nature-Soul, Prakriti, the unequal, active, mutable power. Lastly, the supreme Self has to be seen as the supreme Purusha governing this Prakriti of whom the soul in nature is a partial manifestation, by whom all works are directed, in a perfect transcendence, through Nature. To Him love and adoration and the sacrifice of works have to be offered; the whole being has to be surrendered to Him and the whole consciousness raised up to dwell in this divine consciousness so that the human soul may share in His divine transcendence of Nature and of His works and act in a perfect spiritual liberty.

The first step is Karmayoga, the selfless sacrifice of works, and here the Gita's insistence is on action. The second is Jnanayoga, the self-realisation and knowledge of the true nature of the self and the world, and here the insistence is on knowledge; but the sacrifice of works continues and the path of Works becomes one with but does not disappear into the path of Knowledge. The last step is Bhaktiyoga, adoration and seeking of the supreme Self as the Divine Being, and here the insistence is on devotion; but the knowledge is not subordinated, only raised, vitalised and fulfilled, and still the sacrifice of works continues; the double path becomes the triune way of knowledge, works and devotion. And the fruit of the sacrifice, the one fruit still placed before the seeker is attained, union with the divine Being and oneness with the supreme divine Nature.

*Sri Aurobindo Vol. 13: Pp 26-35*

## MAN : A TRANSITIONAL BEING

*M*an is a transitional being, he is not final. For in man and high beyond him ascend the radiant degrees that climb to a divine supermanhood. There lies our destiny and the liberating key to our aspiring but troubled and limited mundane existence.

We mean by man mind imprisoned in a living body. But mind is not the highest possible power of consciousness; for mind is not in possession of Truth, but only its ignorant seeker. Beyond mind is a supramental or gnostic power of consciousness that is in eternal possession of Truth. This supermind is at its source the dynamic consciousness, in its nature at once and inseparably infinite wisdom and infinite will of the divine Knower and Creator. Supermind is

superman; a gnostic supermanhood is the next distinct and triumphant evolutionary step to be reached by earthly nature.

The step from man to superman is the next approaching achievement in the earth's evolution. It is inevitable because it is at once the intention of the inner Spirit and the logic of Nature's process. The appearance of a human possibility in a material and animal world was the first glint of some coming divine Light, the first far-off promise of a godhead to be born out of Matter.

The appearance of the superman in the human world will be the fulfilment of this divine promise. Out of the material consciousness in which our mind works as a chained slave is emerging the disk of a secret sun of Power and Joy and Knowledge. The supermind will be the formed body of that radiant effulgence.

Supermanhood is not man climbed to his own natural zenith, not a superior degree of human greatness, knowledge, power, intelligence, will, character, genius, dynamic force, saintliness, love, purity or perfection. Supermind is something beyond mental man and his limits; it is a greater consciousness than the highest consciousness proper to human nature.

Man is a mental being whose mentality works here involved, obscure and degraded in a physical brain. Even in the highest of his kind it is balked of its luminous possibilities of supreme force and freedom by this dependence, shut off even from its own divine powers, impotent to change our life beyond certain narrow and precarious limits; it is an imprisoned and checked narrow force, most often nothing but a servitor or caterer of interests or a purveyor of amusement to the life and the body. But divine superman will be a gnostic spirit. Supermind in him will lay hands on the mental and physical instruments and, standing above and yet penetrating our lower already manifested parts, it will transform mind, life and body.

Mind is the highest force in man. But mind in man is an ignorant, clouded and struggling power. And even when most luminous it is possessed only of a thin, reflected and pallid light. A supermind free, master, expressive of divine glories will be the superman's central instrument. Its untrammelled movement of self-existent knowledge, spontaneous power and untainted delight will impress the harmony of the life of the gods on the earthly existence.

Man in himself is little more than an ambitious nothing. He is a littleness that reaches to a wideness and a grandeur that are beyond him, a dwarf enamoured of the heights. His mind is a dark ray in the splendours of the universal Mind. His life is a striving, exulting, suffering, an eager passion-tossed and sorrow-stricken or a blindly and dumbly longing petty moment of the universal Life. His body is a

labouring perishable speck in the material universe. This cannot be the end of the mysterious upward surge of Nature. There is something beyond, something that mankind shall be; it is seen now only in broken glimpses through rifts in the great wall of limitations that deny its possibility and existence. An immortal soul is somewhere with him and gives out some sparks of its presence; above an eternal spirit overshadows him and upholds the soul-continuity of his nature. But this greater spirit is obstructed from descent by the hard lid of his constructed personality; and that inner luminous soul is wrapped, stifled, oppressed in dense outer coatings. In all but a few the soul is seldom active, inmost hardly perceptible. The soul and spirit in man seem rather to exist above and behind his nature than to be a part of his external and visible reality. They are in course of birth rather than born in Matter; they are for human consciousness possibilities rather than things realised and present.

Man's greatness is not in what he is, but in what he makes possible. His glory is that he is the closed place and secret workshop of a living labour in which supermanhood is being made ready by a divine Craftsman. But he is admitted too to a yet greater greatness and it is this that, allowed to be unlike the lower creation, he is partly an artisan of this divine change; his conscious assent, his consecrated will and participation are needed that into his body may descend the glory that will replace him. His aspiration is earth's call to the supermental creator.

If earth calls and the Supreme answers, the hour can be even now for that immense and glorious transformation.

But what shall be the gain to be won for the Earth-consciousness we embody by this unprecedented ascent from mind to supermind and what the ransom of the supramental change? To what end should man leave his safe human limits for this hazardous adventure?

First consider what was gained when nature passed from the brute inconscience and inertia of what seems inanimate Matter to the vibrant awakening of sensibility of plant range. Life was gained; the gain was the first beginning of a mite groping and involved, reaching a consciousness that stretches out dumbly for growth, towards sense vibration, to a preparation for vital yearnings, a living joy and beauty. The plant achieved a first form of life but could not possess it, because this first organized life-consciousness had feeling and seeking but blind, dumb, deaf, chained to the soil and was involved in its own nerve and tissue; it could not get out of them, could not get behind its nerve self as does the vital mind of the animal; still less could it turn down from above upon it to know and realise and control its own motions as does

the observing and thinking mind in man. This was an imprisoned gain, for there was still a gross oppression of the first Inconscience which had covered up with the brute phenomenon of Matter and of Energy of Matter all signs of the Spirit. Nature could in no wise stop here, because she held much in her that was still occult, potential, unexpressed, unorganized, latent; the evolution had perforce to go farther. The animal had to replace the plant at the head and top of Nature.

And what then was gained when Nature passed from the obscurity of the plant kingdom to the awakened sense, desire and emotion and the free mobility of animal life? The gain was liberated sense and feeling and desire and courage and cunning and the contrivance of the objects of desire, passion and action and hunger and battle and conquest and the sex-call and play and pleasure, and all the joy and pain of the conscious living creature. Not only the life of the body which the animal has in common with the plant but a life-mind that appeared for the first time in the earth-story and grew from form to more organized form till it reached in the best the limit of its own formula.

The animal achieved a first form of mind, but could not possess it, because this first organized mind-consciousness was enslaved to a narrow scope, tied to the full functioning of the physical body and brain and nerve, tied to serve the physical life and its desires and needs and passions, limited to the insistent uses of the vital urge, to material longing and feeling and action, bound in its own inferior instrumentation, its spontaneous combinings of association and memory and instinct. It could not get away from them, could not get behind them as man's intelligence gets behind them to observe them; still less could it turn down on them from above as do human reason and will to control, enlarge, re-order, exceed, sublimates.

At each capital step of Nature's ascent there is a reversal of consciousness in the evolving spirit. As when a climber turns on a summit to which he has laboured and looks down with an exalted and wider power of vision on all that was once above or on a level with him but is now below his feet, the evolutionary being not only transcends his past self, his former now exceeded status, but commands from a higher grade of self-experience and vision, with a new apprehending feeling or a new comprehending sight and effectuating power in a greater system of values, all that was once his own consciousness but is now below him and belongs to an inferior creation. This reversal is the sign of a decisive victory and the seal of a radical progress in Nature.

The new consciousness attained in the spiritual evolution is always higher in grade and power, always larger, more comprehensive, wider in sight and feeling, richer and finer in faculties, more complex, organic, dominating than the consciousness that was once our own but is now left behind us. There are greater breadth and space, heights before impassable, unexpected depths and intimacies. There is a luminous expansion that is the very sign-manual of the Supreme upon his work.

Mark that each of the great radical steps forward already taken by Nature has been infinitely greater in its change, incalculably vaster in its consequences than its puny predecessor. There is a miraculous opening to an always richer and wider expression, there is a new illuminating of the creation and a dynamic heightening of its significances. There is in this world we live in no equality of all on a flat level, but a hierarchy of ever-increasing precipitous superiorities pushing their mountain shoulders upwards towards the Supreme.

Because man is a mental being, he naturally imagines that mind is the one great leader and actor or creator or the indispensable agent in the universe. But this is an error; even for knowledge mind is not the only or the greatest possible instrument, the one aspirant and discoverer. Mind is a clumsy interlude between Nature's vast and precise subconscious action and the vaster infallible superconscious action of the Godhead.

There is nothing mind can do that cannot be better done in the mind's immobility and thought-free stillness.

When mind is still, then Truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of the silence.

Truth cannot be attained by the Mind's thought but only by identity and silent vision. Truth lives in the calm wordless Light of the eternal spaces; she does not intervene in the noise and cackle of logical debate.

Thought in the mind can at most be Truth's brilliant and transparent garment; it is not even her body. Look through the robe, not at it and you may see some hint of her form. There can be a thought-body of Truth, but that is the spontaneous supramental Thought and Word that leap fully formed out of the Light, not any difficult mental counterfeit and patchwork. The Supramental Thought is not a means of arriving at Truth, but a way of expressing her; for Truth in the Supermind is self-found or self-existent. It is an arrow from the Light, not a bridge to reach it.

Cease inwardly from thought and word, be motionless within you, look upward into the light and outward into the vast cosmic consciousness that is around you. Be more and more one with the

brightness and the vastness. Then will Truth dawn on you from above and flow in you from all around you.

But only if the mind is no less intense in its purity than its silence. For in an impure mind the silence will soon fill with misleading lights and false voices, the echo or sublimation of its own vain conceits and opinions or the response to its secret pride, vanity, ambition, lust, greed desire. The Titans and the Demons will speak to it more readily than the divine Voices. Silence is indispensable, but also there is needed wideness. If the mind is not silent, it cannot receive the lights and voices of the supernal Truth or receiving mixes with them its own flickering tongues and blind pretentious babble. Active, arrogant, noisy it distorts and disfigures what it receives. If it is not wide, it cannot house the effective power and creative force of the Truth. Some light may play there but it becomes narrow, confined and sterile: the Force that is descending is cabined and thwarted and withdraws again to its vast heights from this rebellious foreign plane. Or even if something comes down and remains it is a pearl in the mire; for no change takes place in the nature or else there is formed only a thin intensity that points narrowly upward to the summits, but can hold little and diffuse less upon the world around it.

*Sri Aurobindo Vol 17; Pp 7-12*

## THE HUMAN ASPIRATION

She follows to the goal of those that are passing on beyond, she is the first in the eternal succession of the dawns that are coming—Usha widens bringing out that which lives, awakening someone who was dead.... What is her scope when she harmonises with the dawns that shone out before and those that now must shine? She desires the ancient mornings and fulfils their light; projecting forwards her illumination she enters into communion with the rest that are to come.

*Kutsa Angirasa—Rig Veda<sup>1</sup>.*

Threefold are those supreme births of this divine force that is in the world, they are true, they are desirable; he moves there wide-overt within the Infinite and shines pure, luminous and fulfilling. ... That which is immortal in mortals and possessed of the truth, is a god

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<sup>1</sup> I. 113.8,10

and established inwardly as an energy working out in our divine powers... Become high-uplifted, O Strength, pierce all veils, manifest in us the things of the Godhead.

*Vamadeva—Rig Veda.*<sup>2</sup>

The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and, as it seems, his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation—for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment—is also the highest which his thought can envisage. It manifests itself in the divination of Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality. The ancient dawns of human knowledge have left us their witness to this constant aspiration; today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings. The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last—God, Light, Freedom, Immortality.

These persistent ideals of the race are at once the contradiction of its normal experience and the affirmation of higher and deeper experiences which are abnormal to humanity and only to be attained, in their organized entirety, by a revolutionary individual effort or an evolutionary general progression. To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilit or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation,—this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution. To the ordinary material intellect which takes its present organization of consciousness for the limit of its possibilities, the direct contradiction of the unrealised ideals with the realised fact is a final argument against their validity. But if we take a more deliberate view of the world's workings, that direct opposition appears rather as part of Nature's profoundest method and the seal of her completest sanction.

For all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony. They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity. To rest content with an unsolved discord is possible for the practical and more animal part of man, but impossible for his fully awakened mind, and usually

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<sup>1</sup> I. 113.8,10

even his practical parts only escape from the general necessity either by shutting out the problem or by accepting a rough, utilitarian and unillumined compromise. For essentially, all Nature seeks a harmony, life and matter in their own sphere as much as mind in the arrangement of its perceptions. The greater the apparent disorder of the materials offered or the apparent disparateness, even to irreconcilable opposition, of the elements that have to be utilised, the stronger is the spur, and it drives towards a more subtle and puissant order than can normally be the result of a less difficult endeavour. The accordance of active Life with a material of form in which the condition of activity itself seems to be inertia, is one problem of opposites that Nature has solved and seeks always to solve better with greater complexities; for its perfect solution would be the material immortality of a fully organized mind-supporting animal body. The accordance of conscious mind and conscious will with a form and a life in themselves not overtly self-conscious and capable at best of a mechanical or sub-conscious will is another problem of opposites in which she has produced astonishing results, and aims always at higher marvels; for there her ultimate miracle would be an animal consciousness no longer seeking but possessed of Truth and Light, with the practical omnipotence which would result from the possession of a direct and perfected knowledge. Not only, then, is the upward impulse of man towards the accordance of yet higher opposites rational in itself, but it is the only logical completion of a rule and an effort that seems to be a fundamental method of Nature and the very sense of her universal strivings.

We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness. And then there seems to be little objection to a farther step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind. In that case, the unconquerable impulse of man towards God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality presents itself in its right place in the chain as simply the imperative impulse by which Nature is seeking to evolve beyond Mind, and appears to be as natural, true and just as the impulse towards Life which she has planted in certain forms of Matter or the impulse towards Mind which she has planted in certain forms of Life. As there, so here, the impulse exists more or less obscurely in her different vessels with an ever-ascending series in the power of its will-to-be; as there, so here, it is gradually evolving and bound fully to evolve the



necessary organs and faculties. As the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plant up to its full organization in man, so in man himself there is the same ascending series, the preparation, if nothing more, of a higher and divine life. The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the super-man, the God. Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God? For if evolution is the progressive manifestation by Nature of that which slept or worked in her, involved, it is also the overt realisation of that which she secretly is. We cannot, then, bid her pause at a given stage of her evolution, nor have we the right to condemn with the religionist as perverse and presumptuous or with the rationalist as a disease or hallucination any intention she may evince or effort she may make to go beyond. If it be true that Spirit is involved in Matter and apparent Nature is secret God, then the manifestation of the divine in himself and the realisation of God within and without are the highest and most legitimate aim possible to man upon earth.

Thus the eternal paradox and eternal truth of a divine life in an animal body, an important aspiration or reality inhabiting a mortal tenement, a single and universal consciousness representing itself in limited minds and divided egos, a transcendent, indefinable, timeless and spaceless Being who alone renders time and space and cosmos possible, and in all these the higher truth realisable by the lower term, justify themselves to the deliberate reason as well as to the persistent instinct or intuition of mankind. Attempts are sometimes made to have done finally with questionings which have so often been declared insoluble by logical thought and to persuade men to limit their mental activities to the practical and immediate problems of their material existence in the universe; but such evasions are never permanent in their effect. Mankind returns from them with a more vehement impulse of inquiry or a more violent hunger for an immediate solution. By that hunger mysticism profits and new religions arise to replace the old that have been destroyed or stripped of significance by a scepticism which itself could not satisfy because, although its business was inquiry, it was unwilling sufficiently to inquire. The attempt to deny or stifle a truth because it is yet obscure in its outward workings and too often represented by obscurantist superstition or a crude faith, is itself a kind of obscurantism. The will to escape from a cosmic necessity because it is arduous, difficult to justify by immediate tangible results, slow in regulating its operations, must turn out eventually to have been no acceptance of the truth of Nature but a revolt against the secret, mightier will of the great Mother. It is better and more rational

to accept what she will not allow us as a race to reject and lift it from the sphere of blind instinct, obscure intuition and random aspiration into the light of reason and an instructed and consciously self-guiding will. And if there is any higher light of illumined intuition or self-revealing truth which is now in man either obstructed and inoperative or works with intermittent glancings as if from behind a veil or with occasional displays as of the northern lights in our material skies, then there also we need not fear to aspire. For it is likely that such is the next higher state of consciousness of which Mind is only a form and veil, and through the splendours of that light may lie the path of our progressive self-enlargement into whatever highest state is humanity's ultimate resting-place.

*Sri Aurobindo* Vol. 18; Pp 1-5

## THE FIFTEENTH OF AUGUST 1947 : MESSAGE

August 15th, 1947 is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But we can also make it by our life and acts as a free nation an important date in a new age opening for the whole world, for the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity.

August 15th is my own birthday and it is naturally gratifying to me that it should have assumed this vast significance. I take this coincidence, not as a fortuitous accident, but as the sanction and seal of the Divine Force that guides my steps on the work with which I began life, the beginning of its full fruition. Indeed, on this day I can watch almost all the world-movements which I hoped to see fulfilled in my lifetime, though then they looked like impracticable dreams, arriving at fruition or on their way to achievement. In all these movements free India may well play a large part and take a leading position.

The first of these dreams was a revolutionary movement which would create a free and united India. India today is free but she has not achieved unity. At one moment it almost seemed as if in the very act of liberation she would fall back into the chaos of separate States which preceded the British conquest. But fortunately it now seems probable that this danger will be averted and a large and powerful, though not yet a complete union will be established. Also, the wisely

drastic policy of the Constituent Assembly has made it probable that the problem of the depressed classes will be solved without schism or fissure. But the old communal division into Hindus and Muslims seems now to have hardened into a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that this settled fact will not be accepted as settled forever or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. India's internal development and prosperity may be impeded, her position among the nations weakened, her destiny impaired or even frustrated. This must not be; the partition must go. Let us hope that that may come about naturally, by an increasing recognition of the necessity not only of peace and concord but of common action, by the practice of common action and the creation of means for that purpose. In this way unity may finally come about under whatever form—the exact form may have a pragmatic but not a fundamental importance. But by whatever means, in whatever way, the division must go; unity must and will be achieved, for it is necessary for the greatness of India's future.

Another dream was for the resurgence and liberation of the peoples of Asia and her return to her great role in the progress of human civilisation. Asia has arisen; large parts are now quite free or are at this moment being liberated: its other still subject or partly subject parts are moving through whatever struggles towards freedom. Only a little has to be done and that will be done today or tomorrow. There India has her part to play and has begun to play it with an energy and ability which already indicate the measure of her possibilities and the place she can take in the council of the nations.

The third dream was a world-union forming the outer basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind. That unification of the human world is under way; there is an imperfect initiation organized but struggling against tremendous difficulties. But the momentum is there and it must inevitably increase and conquer. Here too India has begun to play a prominent part and, if she can develop that larger statesmanship which is not limited by the present facts and immediate possibilities but looks into the future and brings it nearer, her presence may make all the difference between a slow and timid and a bold and swift development. A catastrophe may intervene and interrupt or destroy what is being done, but even then the final result is sure. For unification is a necessity of Nature, an inevitable movement. Its necessity for the nations is also clear, for without it the freedom of the small nations may be at any moment in peril and the life even of the large and powerful nations insecure. The unification is therefore to the interests of all, and only human imbecility and stupid

selfishness can prevent it; but these cannot stand for ever against the necessity of Nature and the Divine Will. But an outward basis is not enough; there must grow up an international spirit and outlook, international forms and institutions must appear, perhaps such developments as dual or multilateral citizenship, willed interchange or voluntary fusion of cultures. Nationalism will have fulfilled itself and lost its militancy and would no longer find these things incompatible with self-preservation and the integrality of its outlook. A new spirit of oneness will take hold of the human race.

Another dream, the spiritual gift of India to the world has already begun. India's spirituality is entering Europe and America in an ever-increasing measure. That movement will grow; amid the disasters of the time more and more eyes are turning towards her with hope and there is even an increasing resort not only to her teachings, but to her psychic and spiritual practice.

The final dream was a step in evolution which would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness and begin the solution of the problems which have perplexed and vexed him since he first began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society. This is still a personal hope and an idea, an ideal which has begun to take hold both in India and in the West on forward-looking minds. The difficulties in the way are more formidable than in any other field of endeavour, but difficulties were made to be overcome and if the Supreme Will is there, they will be overcome. Here too, if this evolution is to take place, since it must proceed through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, the initiative can come from India and, although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers.

Such is the content which I put into this date of India's liberation; whether or how far this hope will be justified depends upon the new and free India.



**MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD**

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## INDIA AND ASIA

EXPERIENCE HAS PROVED that cultural contacts are far more effective in uniting nations than political alliances. Political alliances are based on a spirit of bargaining while cultural contacts deepen mutual understanding. Such understanding is more necessary today in view of the new awakening which is taking place throughout the Eastern world. We have today, throughout the Orient, a movement for educational and cultural regeneration which demands close attention and sympathetic study.

For various reasons, India in recent years has been brought into contact with the countries of Europe and America in varying degrees. The need today is for a greater understanding with countries outside that orbit. The need of an organization to promote such cultural contacts is obvious, but I must confess that I have found some difficulty in choosing an appropriate name for such a body. One body to cover all these regions may well prove unwieldy, and I can think of no suitable name to cover all of them. Geography itself has determined the lines on which such associations can be built. We must, on the one hand, establish closer contacts with Turkey, Afghanistan and the Middle-East countries. On the other we should also develop closer relations with China, Japan and the countries of South-East Asia. A solution which strikes me at first sight is to have two bodies and call one India-Middle-East Association, and the other India-South-East Asia Association. Even this is not fully satisfactory as Turkey and Afghanistan would not be included in a Middle-East Association. Similarly, an India-South-East Asia Association would leave out countries like China, Japan and Korea. It seems that the only way of overcoming this difficulty is to describe the organization as an Indian Council of Cultural Co-operation. This body would have two different sections— one for the Western group of countries including Afghanistan, Turkey and Egypt, and the other for the second group, including Korea, Japan and China.



Obviously, the main object of such a Council will be to maintain and increase cultural contacts between India and these countries. It should act as an agency for the exchange of information and literature as well as personnel. Short visits of professors and students from India to these countries and from these countries to India would go a long way to increase mutual understanding. The Council should, I feel, also maintain a library and a reading room and arrange for the publication of magazines and other periodical literature.

A non-official organization, if it is representative of the intelligentsia of the land, is, from the nature of the case, best suited to perform functions of this type. If we consider how such an organization is to be set up, I think, you will agree with me that the best method would be to frame a constitution by which all the Indian universities and appropriate cultural societies may send three or four representatives to the proposed Council. In addition, the Council should include eminent men who have distinguished themselves in the field of art, letters or the humanities.\*

## ART AND EDUCATION

*I*t is today realised that no education can be complete which does not pay proper attention to the development and refinement of the emotions. This can be done best through the provision of facilities for training the sensibilities by the practice of one of the fine arts. Apart from the general question of developing the finest aspects of personality through artistic education, there is also the immediate utility of such education in developing our manual skill and perceptive sensibility. It is recognized today that education at pre-primary or nursery stage can be best imparted by training the child in the matching of colours, shapes and sizes. This releases the creative instinct in the child and thus diverts his superfluous energy from merely destructive channels into those of social behaviour and decorum. Thus, whether from the point of view of training of the emotions or refinement of sentiments or development of manual skill and creative urge, the importance of art as an element of education cannot be over-emphasised.

The obvious implication of this is that a society is healthy and well balanced if training in and appreciation of arts are widespread among

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\*From the Address at the Conference for Cultural Co-operation between India and Asian countries, New Delhi, August 21, 1949

its members. The modern malaise of society in which individuals are torn and divided and society riven with a hundred conflicts is the result of the fact that the arts have been divorced from intimate contact with life at a thousand points. I may recall to your minds that there was no distinction recognized between art and craft in the past. In the olden days, the craftsmen who produced objects for the use of society were also simultaneously artists. On the other hand, artists took pride in the excellence of their craft and never hesitated to take their full share in social production. One of the unfortunate results of the Industrial Revolution and the development of the capitalist system of production has been the divorce between art and craft. The result is that the artists tend to look down upon the craftsmen as mere artisans. The labourers who produce goods for consumption are, on the other hand, equally suspicious of the social and seemingly useless activities of the artists. In the sequel, both art and craft have suffered, so that art is today divorced from our immediate requirements while craft has degenerated into a mechanical manipulation from which all joy of creation has disappeared.

It is for the artists to attempt to bridge this gulf. You may remember the efforts of William Morris to overcome this breach by ensuring that even commercial products must have the highest artistic qualities. This would immediately result in an improvement of taste throughout society and thus enrich the life of the common man. It would, on the other and, be of equal service to the artist himself. He could in such a context depend upon the support of society as a whole instead of a handful of rich patrons here and there. Much of the insecurity and poverty from which the artist suffers today is due to lack of social support. The moment he re-establishes contacts with society, the causes of insecurity disappear and the results would be of advantage to art and craft and to society at large.

In a growing democracy the need of this closer relation between the artist and the average man has become even more important. It is the standard of the common man which determines the standard of society. If therefore the life of the common man is poor and devoid of artistic qualities, there is no possibility of a rich and flourishing art. Artists must, therefore, play their full part in the education of the people, and it is for this Conference to suggest to the Government how best this could be achieved through museums, art galleries, travelling exhibitions and any other methods that may be necessary.\*

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\* From the Inaugural Speech at the All India Conference on Arts, Calcutta, August 29, 1949

## SOCIAL EDUCATION IN THE RURAL AREAS

*I*ndia had been at her best when her doors were wide open to all who came from abroad. She freely partook of whatever lessons the world had to teach and equally freely gave the world her best. The acceptance of unity in diversity has been her motto throughout the ages. The essence of this principle is a large and wide-hearted toleration in which differences are recognized and given their due. The Indian genius has always recognized that truth has many facets, and conflict and hatred arise because people claim a monopoly of truth and virtue.

This was the lesson of India in the days of her glory. This is the lesson which Mahatma has taught anew in the context of the modern age. His message to the Indian people was one of toleration, goodwill and love for all. Hatred, he said, is born of weakness and fear and he therefore exhorted his countrymen to shed fear. He believed in a new education which would reshape the character of man. Its aim is to eradicate the impulse to exploitation, violence and ill-will from the individual and the society. He not only preached the need for love and toleration for all but laid down his life to vindicate these eternal values. If we can instil in our private and public conduct his spirit of tolerance and large-hearted humanity so that divergences can exist side by side without conflict, we will have solved one of the most difficult problems of the modern world.\*

## CONCEPT OF MAN IN THE EAST AND THE WEST\*\*

*I*n the last six thousand years or more, the human-being has travelled over a vast region from his early beginnings in primitive society. This period has seen man overcome many hidden obstacles and meet the challenge of inanimate nature and the animate world. In spite of all the vicissitudes which man has had to face during this period, there has, on the whole, been continuous and steady progress in wresting from nature some of her greatest secrets. Veil after veil has been torn asunder from the hidden face of nature and secrets that are still unknown are yielding to his quest.

While man's triumphant progress in unveiling the face of nature has been steady and continuous, can we say with equal confidence that he

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\*From the Inaugural Address at the Unesco Seminar on Rural Adult Education, Mysore, November 2, 1949

\*\*Inaugural Speech at the Symposium on the Concept of Man and the Philosophy of Education in the East and the West, New Delhi, December 13, 1951

has succeeded in unveiling the lineaments of his own self? Can we say that after six thousand years of quest of the Real, man today sees himself as he essentially is? I think you will agree that we have to make a sad confession in this matter. The mirror that man has fashioned reflects all aspects of the world but not his own inner self. We have to admit that man has not yet been able to form a clear picture of his own nature. The secrets of the universe are clearer to him than the secrets of the self. For some three thousand years or more, philosophers have again and again asked what man is, whence he comes and whither he goes. The questions still remain largely unanswered. It is obvious that man cannot achieve a satisfactory solution of the problems of the individual, society, nations and international relations until he knows clearly the nature of his own self and determines what the place of man is in the vastness of the universe.

The basic issue before you is the consideration of this problem. You have met to discuss the Concept of Man as it has been enunciated by thinkers in the East and the West. I would, at the very beginning, like to emphasise that in speaking of the East and the West, we are thinking only of certain special features in the thought of these regions. This cannot and does not mean that there are not large areas of common and agreed ground. Man all over the world has adopted common methods of reasoning and thought. The human reason is one and identical. Human feelings are largely similar. The human will operates more or less in the same manner in similar situations everywhere. It is therefore natural that the human way of looking at himself and the world is largely common in different parts of the world. Their attitudes towards the unknown mysteries of existence are also largely similar. The Greeks who looked with admiration and awe upon the peaks of Olympus shared the same feelings as the Indian who meditated in the valleys of the Himalayas and looked upon its eternal snow.

In spite of large areas of agreement, human minds in different regions of the world have adopted a different approach to some of their common problems. Even where the approach has not been different, there has been a tendency to place a different emphasis on the different aspects of common problems and common solutions. No two situations are exactly alike. It was inevitable that people in different regions should pay greater attention to different aspects of common problems. It is on account of such differences in emphasis that we describe a particular mode of thought as characteristic of a particular nation or region. It is from this point of view that I will try to formulate what are the differences that characterise the East from the West. I think you will all agree that even where the solutions are similar in pattern and outline, there are differences in shade and colour which justify us in calling some of the solutions Eastern and others Western.

There are, as I have said, many points in common between the views of philosophers in the East and the West but there is one distinction in

emphasis between India, Greece and China which strikes us from the very beginning of recorded history. In India, the emphasis of philosophy has, on the whole, been on the inner experience of man. Philosophers here have sought to understand man's inner nature, and in this pursuit have gone beyond the regions of sense, intellect and even reason and sought to assert the identity of man with a deep hidden Reality. In Greece, the philosopher has been interested mainly in understanding the nature of world outside. He has sought to determine the place of man in the outer world. His view has therefore been, on the whole, more extrovert than in India. In China, on the other hand, philosophers have not worried about the inner nature of man nor about external nature but concentrated on the study of man in relation to his fellows. These differences in orientation have exerted a profound influence on later developments of philosophy in each of these regions. We find therefore that there are striking differences in their respective concepts of man.

The Greeks approached the concept of man from an external point of view. Hence we find that from the earliest times, Greek philosophy devotes far greater attention to what man *does* rather than to what man *is*. It is true that some of the earlier Greek philosophers thought of man as essentially a spiritual entity, and we find that this is perhaps the prevailing mode of thought up to the time of Plato. With the advent of Aristotle, there began, however, a new orientation in which the attention is diverted from the idea of man to man's activities in the world here and now. Under the influence of Aristotle who defined man as a rational animal, Philosophy became more positive. In course of time, this positive, empirical and scientific attitude became the prevailing climate of thought in the West. Rationality distinguishes man from other animals, and it is through the exercise of rationality that he has advanced far beyond his early animal origin. Nevertheless, he remains essentially and fundamentally a progressive animal. Rarely has this thought been expressed so beautifully as by the German Philosopher, Riehl. While he admits that man has descended from the animal, he points out that he has now reached a stage where he must look above and not below. He is the only animal that stands erect and can continue to do so only if his look is upward. God is the goal towards which man must strive if he is to retain his present stature.

It is true that the influence of Christianity and the persistence of the Platonic tradition remained a powerful element in European thought. Thus, we find that the scholastics in the Medieval Ages were at times theologians rather than philosophers. Even in the modern period, there is a strong religious idealistic strain in the European thought. Since the beginning of the Modern Age, this strain has, however, steadily yielded place to a philosophical outlook dominated by the concepts of science. The triumphant progress of science began in the seventeenth century and

increased man's power over nature. The success of science dazzled the Western mind and induced a faith in its unfailing efficacy. The West sought to apply the concepts and methods of science in all fields of human experience and treat man also as an object among other objects. In course of time, a materialistic and scientific temper became the pervasive outlook of the West. We find a culmination of this development in the nineteenth and the twentieth century. Darwin sought to establish that man is descended from animals while Marx argued this his mentality is largely the resultant of his material environment. Freud, in the twentieth century, went a step further and taught that not only is man descended from animals, but his mentality retains even today traces of his animal origin.

As opposed to this conception of man as a progressive animal, we find in the East a completely different concept of man. The East has from the very beginning emphasised man's intrinsic spirituality. The contemplation of the inner reality of man gave rise to the philosophy of Vedanta in India and Sufism in Arabia. This spiritual concept of man has deeply influenced the mentality of man throughout the East and is not unknown even in the West. According to this outlook, we cannot understand the essence of man if we regard him as only a material entity. The real nature of man can be understood only if we conceive of him as an emanation of God. There was in Eastern philosophy a strong pantheistic strain. In the different schools of Indian philosophy, all things are regarded as expressions of God's being but even then man belongs to a special category. For he is the highest manifestation of God's being. In the words of the Gita,

"Thou art the Imperishable, the Supreme to be realised,  
Thou art the ultimate resting place of the universe,  
Thou art the undying guardian of the eternal law,  
Thou art the Primal Person." (XI. 18)

Similarly, we find that according to the Sufis, man is a wave of the boundless sea that is God. He is a ray of the Sun that is God. Man can regard himself as different from the Eternal Being only so long as his vision is clouded by the evil of ignorance. Once there is enlightenment, all these distinctions dissolve and man recognizes himself as a moment in the being of the Eternal. The concept of man which the East has evolved regards man as not merely an animal superior to all earthly creatures but as essentially different in nature. Man is not the first among equals but has a being which is higher than that of any other creature. He is not only a progressive animal, but reveals in his being the lineaments of God Himself. In fact, his nature is so high and elevated that nothing higher is conceivable to human reason. In the words of the Chhandogya Upanishad:

That is Reality. That is Atman (Soul). That are Thou." (9 : 4)

This doctrine has also been beautifully expressed in Arabic:

*Man arafa naf sahu faqad arafa rabbahu*

"He who knows himself knows God."

The same principle, when further developed, gives rise to the idea that man is not an isolated individual but contains in himself the entire universe. In the words of the Gita,

"Here today, behold the whole universe, moving and unmoving and whatever else thou desirest to see, O Gudakesa (Arjuna), are all unified in My body" (XI : 7)

A Sufi poet has expressed the same concept in the Arabic verse :

*"Watahsab annaka jarmum saghir  
Wafika antavi alemun akbaru"*

"Thou thinkest that thou art a small body: thou knowest not that a universe greater than the physical world is contained in thee."

It will be readily agreed that there can be no higher concept of man. God marks the highest limit of human thought. By identifying man with God, the Eastern concept of man elevates him to godhead. Man has therefore no other goal but to re-establish his identity with God. He thus becomes superior to the entire creation.

## II

We have till now discussed the concept of man from the point of view of the philosophies in the East and the West. We now wish to review briefly what religion has to say on the question. If we consider the attitude of Judaism and Christianity, we find a clear statement in the Old Testament that God created man in his own image. From this it would follow that man shares in the attributes of God. A strong element of spiritual mysticism has characterised the attitude of Christianity, and has acted as a check to the predominance of extreme materialistic tendencies. In Islam we find traces of the influence of the same outlook. In fact, the Quran has gone a step further in its exaltation of man. The Quran proclaims that not only is man created in the image of God but is His regent on earth. In speaking of the creation of Adam, God says—

*Inni jaelunfil arde khalifa* (2 :29)

"I want to create my viceroy on earth."

This idea of the viceroyalty of man profoundly influenced the Arab philosophers. Two things may be noted in this connection. As regent of God on earth, man has an immediate affinity with Him. This also makes

man superior to all creation and makes him master not only of animal life but also of the forces of nature itself. The Quran proclaims again and again: "Whatever is on the earth or in the heavens has been made subject to man." (XIII: 45)

It is generally recognized that Aristotle deeply influenced most of the Arab philosophers, but even in their interpretation of Aristotle, they show clear indications of the influence of the idea of man's vicereignty of God. Avicenna (Ibn Sina) and Averroes (Ibn Rushd) are metaphysically Aristotelians but their spiritual orientation in Islam makes them recognize that since man shares in God's attributes, there is no limit to the heights which he can attain in both knowledge and power. Muslim scholastics like Al Ghazzali, Ar Razi, Ar Raghbi Ispahani and others have further elaborated this idea in their various philosophical writings.

We must, however, admit that while the conception of man in both Vedanta and Sufism gives him a lofty status, neither of these philosophies can escape the charge that if, on the one hand, they set no limit to human capacity, they, on the other hand, imply an element of fatalism that circumscribes man's power. The explanation of this paradox is to be found in their concept of the relation of man to God. Since man is an emanation of divinity, whatever man does is ultimately God's doing; whatever happens is due to the will of God. From this it is but another step to think of man as a mere toy in the hands of fate.

It has been said that while the concepts of Vedanta and Sufism in their pure form have been responsible for some of the highest spiritual attainments of man, they have to some extent acted as an impediment to human progress on the secular plane. The emphasis on the unity of man with God made society relatively insensitive to human suffering, as such suffering was regarded as mere illusion. We therefore find that Eastern societies have often been indifferent to the removal of the causes of social malaise. This explains why some modern thinkers are seeking for a formulation of the philosophy of Vedanta without its fatalism.

We find a similar paradox in the Western concept of man. A philosophy of materialism would, *prima facie*, seem to indicate a determinist outlook on life. Since the law of causality reigns throughout the material world, the same law would tend to hold in the field of human action. We find the culmination of this tendency in the psychological theories of the Behaviourists. The Western mind, however, asserted itself against such a deterministic concept and exhibited an energy of spirit which has rarely been equalled and perhaps never surpassed.

One of the main tasks of the present Symposium should be to examine how we can combine these two concepts which have so profoundly influenced both philosophy and religious outlook in the East and the



West. The Eastern conception of man's status, if combined with the Western concept of progress, would open out to man the possibility of infinite advance without the risks implicit in the misuse of science. It may also indicate a way out of the fatalism which otherwise seems to follow from the Eastern conception of man's identity with God. The Eastern conception of man's status is not only consistent with the progress of Western science, but in fact offers an intelligible explanation of how scientific progress is possible. If man were merely a developed animal, there would be a limit to his advancement. If, however, he shares in God's infinity, there can be no limit to the progress he can achieve. Science can then march from triumph to triumph and solve many of the riddles which trouble man even to this day.

There is a further reason why a synthesis of the Eastern and the Western concepts of man is of the greatest importance to man's future. Science in itself is neutral. Its discoveries can be used equally to heal and to kill. It depends upon the outlook and mentality of the user whether science will be used to create a new heaven on earth or to destroy the world in a common conflagration. If we think of man as only a progressive animal, there is nothing to prevent his using science to further interests based on the passions he shares in common with animals. If, however, we think of him as an emanation of God, he can use science only for the furtherance of God's purposes, that is the achievement of peace on earth and goodwill to all men.

### III

I have tried to indicate that the Eastern and Western concepts of man are in some ways complementary. If the one has emphasised the intrinsic excellence of his being, the other has laid stress on the progress he *has* achieved and *can* achieve through his own efforts. If the one has stressed the spiritual elements in his nature, the other has pointed out that spiritual excellence must also have a requisite physical basis. If in spite of differences in emphasis, the Western and the Eastern concepts of man can be reconciled, there is no reason why the philosophy of education in these two regions should not also be fitted into a wider philosophy of education for the world.

In both the East and the West, the prevalent systems of education have given rise to various paradoxes. In the East, we find a disproportionate emphasis on individual salvation. Man sought knowledge as a means to his own redemption. The Eastern mode of thought with its preoccupation with individual salvation has at times paid inadequate attention to social welfare and progress. In the West on the contrary, there has been a greater emphasis on the need of social progress. In fact, considerations of social welfare have at times led to the growth of totalitarian societies in which the individual has been suppressed. Today

when East and West have been brought nearer to each other through the operations of science, it is necessary that the bias, whether in favour of the individual or of society, should be rectified and a system of education evolved which will give due regard to both individual and social values.

Herein lies the importance of education in the modern world. Experience has shown that education can profoundly affect the development of individuals and, through individuals, of societies. If the individual is not an integrated personality, society cannot be harmonious. The function of education in the modern world is therefore to build up integrated individuals in an integrated society and the concept of both the East and the West must contribute to such a development.

Before I conclude, there is one other problem to which I would like to draw your attention. The question often arises whether education is a means or an end. I would say that on the whole the West has looked upon education as a means while the East has looked upon it as an end. If education is regarded as a means, the question arises, what is the end for which it is the means. The West has often regarded social welfare as the end, but social welfare is a concept which can be interpreted in different ways. In any case, the tendency to regard education as a means leads to some diminution in the value of education. I am inclined to think that the Eastern concept shows a truer understanding of its real nature. By regarding education as an end in itself we recognize knowledge to be one of the ultimate values. I do not think that any Western philosopher would deny the importance of knowledge but its value cannot be fully appreciated unless education is recognized as an end in itself. Further, such recognition would raise the status of man. From this point of view also I am inclined to think that we should look upon education as an end rather than as a mere means to some external good.

#### IV

To sum up. In the Eastern concept, man as an emanation of God shares in His infinite attribute and is capable of achieving mastery over the entire creation. In the Western concept, man is no doubt an animal but there is no limit to the progress that he can achieve in the material field. His scientific achievements are visible proof of his superiority over the rest of creation, and have given him domination over the sky, sea and earth. We may therefore say that the Western practice has substantiated the claim which the Eastern theory has made in respect of man. Since, however, the Western concept has not emphasised the spiritual origin of man, his triumphs in the scientific field have themselves become a source of danger to his survival. If therefore the achievements of Western science can be utilised in the Eastern spirit of man's affinity with God, science would become an instrument not of destruction but for the establishment of human prosperity, peace and progress.

## ART AND THE PEOPLE

*T*he paramount need of the modern age is a closer understanding between the peoples of different countries of the world. Scientific discoveries have effected a revolutionary change in the modes of communication and transport. Distances which in the past took months, if not years, to cross are today covered in hours. People from the distant regions of the world meet today with as much facility as citizens from different quarters of the same city. Science has thus brought together human beings physically, but has it been able to invent a machine that can bring human hearts closer to one another? We have to say with regret—no.

While science has failed to find a way of uniting human hearts, we recall with pleasure that life in its own course has done so for centuries. Cultural relations between different regions and nations date back to the very beginning of history. In fact, even before the dawn of recorded history, cultural contacts had been established among peoples of different regions. How these contacts developed in spite of the difficulties of communication is one of the unsolved mysteries of history. Some 5,000 years ago, India developed in Mohen jo-daro a civilisation which shows clear evidence of relations with countries as far off as Mesopotamia and Egypt. There are indications that such contacts spread far and wide in spite of the obstacles of distance and the difficulties of communication.

If men established relations in days when travel was difficult, we must work for closer contacts today when travel has lost its rigours. In the past such contacts added to the richness of human life. Today when science has knit the world into one compact unit, such contacts are necessary not merely for the enrichment of life but, one may say, for the very survival of humanity. Science has placed in man's hand such tremendous powers of destruction that men of different races and countries must learn to live in friendship and amity if they are to live at all.

The principle that Art is for the people states the obverse of the same truth. It proclaims that true art transcends the likes and dislikes of the individual and serves as the expression of feelings that are universal. It also draws pointed attention to the fact that all great art is educative in the truest sense of the term. It refines and exalts the feelings and educates the sensibilities and the imagination. The most vehement supporter of the principle of Art for Art's sake will not for a moment deny its deep and abiding social value. It is only when the principle that 'Art is for the people' is translated to mean that art must satisfy every passing caprice and whim of the populace that the principle loses its significance and becomes a mistaken dogma.

Politically, the world may be divided into rival camps. There may be a clash of ideologies on the plane of material interests but in the world of spirit, in the creations of art, philosophy, literature and other values, mankind is one. In this field, the creation of any individual becomes the possession of the entire human race. India, with her vast traditions of art ranging back to the immemorial past, will, I hope, serve as a stimulus to the Russian artists and I am sure that the exhibition of the works of the vigorous Soviet artists of today will be helpful to our young artists.\*

## TENSIONS AND GANDHIAN OUTLOOK

*I*n the past, wars were often due to the fact that man's lack of knowledge did not permit him to utilise to the full the resources of nature. One nation or group could therefore satisfy its needs only by depriving others. If food or fodder was scarce, the only means of overcoming this shortage lay in forcible occupation of the fields or pastures belonging to others. Today, the progress of science has created conditions where all legitimate demands of man can be satisfied. We can now live in an economy of plenty rather than one of want. Secrets of nature have been revealed one after the other and those have made available to man the immense wealth of her hidden resources. The tragedy of the situation, however, is that this increase of knowledge, and mastery over nature is being used not so much for the constructive purposes of society as to enhance man's powers of destruction. The energy of the atom has been unlocked and this can bring within the reach of all comfort and plenty. We are, however, concentrating on the use of atomic energy mainly to create terrible engines of destruction. Wireless has brought all mankind nearer to one another, but instead of using it to strengthen the bonds of fellowship among men, we are using it as an aid to a propaganda of hatred and discord. Aeroplanes are being used primarily to develop our offensive in aerial warfare. Greater knowledge of germs and bacteria promises mastery over disease and suffering, but such knowledge is often sought to develop their use as weapons in bacteriological war. Not that these discoveries have no beneficent use, but such use seems subsidiary to the main purpose of employing them as weapons for the destruction of humanity.

Since the beginning of this century, technological and scientific developments have tended to make war and peace co-extensive with the whole world. In the past, some problems may have been solved by war. In any case such wars were confined to a section of the world.

\*From the Speech delivered at the opening of the Soviet Fine Arts Exhibition, New Delhi, March 5, 1952

Today, it is clear that no problem can be solved by war. If an attempt is made to solve any problems by means of war, the consequences extend beyond the frontiers of nations concerned and involve all mankind. Wars have reached a stage where they only succeed in intensifying the hatred between nations and leading to new hatreds. Thus, the only consequence of war today is to enhance the impulse to revenge and retribution. Forces are released that make each war a prelude to further and more devastating wars.

To recognize justice as an absolute value is to substitute right in the place of might. This also implies that ends can never justify means. It was a basic principle of Gandhiji's thought that not only must we aim at truth and justice but must also adopt means that are truthful and just. There is therefore no option before the world today but to turn to Gandhiji's doctrine and methods if we are to escape disaster. He preached that violence and hatred solved no problems and could only lead to further misery. He therefore appealed to men to settle their differences in the light of reason and justice. He held that the only victories were those based on moral principles. The lessons of history confirm his teachings, for history is full of the record of conflicts which seemed to end in victory but were only the prelude to further conflicts and, as often as not, ended in bitter defeat.

In essence, Gandhiji's message is not a new one. It is a message which India gave to the world six hundred years before the birth of Christ through Gautama Buddha. This was also the message which Jesus gave to the world on the Mount of Olives. Jesus, it is often said, was the first and the last Christian. This, however, does not seem to be fully correct. If we look at the history of the Christian Church, we find that it survived the persecution of the Roman Empire and in fact triumphed over it, not by the use of force and violence but by its readiness to suffer persecution and even death for the sake of its ideals. Even when these early Christians had become powerful, they refrained from the use of power. Tertullian gave expression to this attitude in his speech for the defence of the Christians against the accusations of the Gentiles. In an address to the Magistrates he said, "Our origin is but recent, yet already we fill all that your power acknowledges—cities, fortresses, islands, provinces, the assemblies of the people, the wards of Rome, the palace, the senate, the public places and especially the armies. We have left you nothing but your temples. Reflect what wars we are able to undertake. With what promptitude might we not arm ourselves, were we not restrained by our religion, which teaches us that it is better to be killed than to kill?"

Islam appeared on the scene six hundred years after the advent of Christ. When the Prophet of Islam started his mission in Mecca, the whole country rose in determined opposition and sought to suppress his preachings through violence. The persecution became so bitter that it was impossible

for him and his followers to continue at Mecca and ultimately he had to repair to Medina. A section of the people of Medina extended their support to him, but the Quraish of Mecca would not allow him to remain in peace even there. They organized a campaign and launched a violent attack against him. The Prophet was thus compelled to raise the sword in self-defence. He no doubt took recourse to arms but the spirit in which he did so is without parallel in the history of warfare. The Prophet of Islam was compelled to take to the sword but there was no hatred or desire for vengeance in his military operations. Even in the midst of the conflict, when he and his people were violently assailed and he himself had suffered physical injury, he could still say, "My Lord! lead my people along the path of righteousness, for they know not what they are doing."

Can the faintest suggestion of hatred, ill-will and revenge attach to a spirit which even in a situation like this could give vent to such noble sentiments?

Then the day came when he returned victorious to Mecca at the head of thousands of faithful followers. This was an occasion when he could have taken revenge for their past oppression and prosecution. No such thought occurred to him for even a single moment. He forgave without any mental reservation all those who for ten years had helped every conceivable type of persecution on him and his comrades. He declared, "I shall deal with you today in the same manner as Joseph dealt with his persecuting brothers." When they were brought before Joseph in Egypt, he had said, "Today is not a day of judgement for you. May God forgive you and forgiveness is indeed without measure."

In more recent times, we have seen Tolstoy deliver the same message of opposing evil by good, though he had no opportunity of putting his theory to the test.

Gandhiji's greatness lies in this that he propounded non-violence not as a mere theoretical idea but as a practical programme. In fact, his life was a shining example of this principle and that is why he was able to convert large masses of men to his way of thinking. In doing so, Gandhiji at the same time offered to the world a moral substitute for war. Until his time, even thinkers who had recognized the futility of war could offer no substitute for it. In his programme of non-violent non-co-operation, Gandhiji showed a way in which wrong could be opposed without resorting to arms. This is not an easy way and we do not yet see clearly how the method can be applied in the settlement of all international disputes. Since, however, there is no other alternative, if man-kind is to survive, we must find a way of extending its application to all fields of conflict.\*

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\*From the Speech at the inaugural session of the Seminar on the Contribution of Gandhian Outlook and Techniques to the Solution of Tensions between and within Nations, New Delhi, January 5, 1953

## THE ROLE OF DANCE, DRAMA AND MUSIC

India can be proud of a long heritage and tradition in the field of dance, drama and music. In the field of fine arts, as in those of philosophy and science, India and Greece occupy an almost unique position in human history. It is my conviction that in the field of music, the achievement of India is greater than that of even Greece. The breadth and depth of Indian music is perhaps unrivalled as is its integration of vocal and instrumental music.

The essence of Indian civilization and culture has always been a spirit of assimilation and synthesis. Nowhere is this more clearly shown than in the field of music. The amalgamation of Persian and Classical Indian styles during the Middle Ages gave rise to a type of music which combines the excellences of both. When the Muslims came to India, Persian music was already a fully developed system but it did not take Muslims long to discover the special merits of Indian music. They not only adopted it as their own but added to it richly by adapting elements from the Persian tradition. Since then there has been no separate development of the two systems, but within India a combined stream has grown which, in richness and splendour, surpasses both the original tributaries.

Amir Khusro is a well-known name to every student of Indian history. He was a great poet but his inventive genius has left its mark on other fields of the fine arts as well. In music, he has created new forms through the combination of Indian and Persian melodies. *Aiman*, *Tarana*, *Qol*, *Sazgri*, and *Suhla* and other tunes, which are sung to this day by millions of Indians, are a living testimony to this genius and his power of synthesis. In the field of instrumental music, it was he who invented the *Sitar*. He found the *Veena* too elaborate and complicated an instrument and simplified it by reducing the number of strings to only three. The name *Sitar*, which in Persian means three strings, still bears testimony to this fact.

The same process of simplification and development is found in the field of vocal music. Sultan Husain Sharqy, King of Jaunpur, was a great lover of music, and it was he who introduced the *Khayal* style in Indian music. The old classical style of *Dhrupad* was too difficult and rigid for the fluent expression of emotions. In *Khayal*, he perfected a style which has the dignity of the *Dhrupad* without its rigidity and has become one of the most cherished forms of Indian music.

We find the same spirit of assimilation and synthesis in the evolution of the various musical instruments of India. There were *Tanpuras* of various types which were popular in Iran, and India adopted and adapted them to suit her own requirements. Another Persian instrument, *Qanun*, is played even to this day by the people of Kashmir. There is

therefore no better example of the composite culture of India than in the field of music. The co-operation of Hindus and Muslims for almost a thousand years has here brought about a consummation that has perhaps no equal in the world.

We do not know the full history of the development of drama. New researches into Egyptology for the last 50 years indicate that drama was popular in Egypt thousands of years before the advent of Christ. If we are to accept Breasted's theory, it would appear that the Memphite drama was well developed as early as the fourth millennium before Christ. In 800 B.C., the tradition was revived under the orders of Shakaba, the Ethiopian Pharoah, and a small fragment of a play survives to this day. In Babylon and Nineveh also religious festivals were accompanied by drama. All these indicate that, as in the fields of science and philosophy, Greece received inspiration as well as models from the earlier traditions of Egypt.

There is no doubt that whatever might be the source from which the Greeks derived their inspiration, they developed drama and brought it to a level that is still unsurpassed. Comparisons in such fields are invidious, but we can still say that Kalidasa may be compared with the greatest among the Greek dramatists. We have also the works of Bhasa, Bhavabhuti and Banbhattacha who raised the Indian drama to a level which is perhaps not inferior to that attained by the Greeks. In the field of the theory of drama, Indian achievements are perhaps still more remarkable and serve as models even to this day.

In the field of dance, the great variety of Indian style has attracted the notice of all students of arts and culture. The range of Indian dance extends from the strictly classical styles, developed in the temples with their infinite variety of expression and modulations, to the wonderful rhythm and flow of folk dances in different regions of the land. In their variety they present a richness of forms that have few parallels elsewhere in the world. What is most remarkable is the continuity of these traditions and the vigour they display to this day.

This precious heritage of dance, drama and music is one which we must cherish and develop. We must do so not only for our own sake but also as our contribution to the cultural heritage of mankind. Nowhere is it truer than in the field of art, that to sustain means to create traditions cannot be preserved but can only be created afresh. It will be the aim of these academies to preserve our traditions by offering them an institutional form.\*

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\*From Welcome address at the inauguration of the Indian Academy of Dance, Drama and Music, New Delhi, January 28, 1953



## THE ROLE OF VISUAL ART

*I* have always been of the view that apart from the intrinsic value of art for its own sake, it is an essential element in education as it develops the feelings and aesthetic sensibilities of man. I may remind you of what I said at that conference in Calcutta in defence of art in education and life:

"It is today realised that no education can be complete which does not pay proper attention to the development and refinement of the emotions. This can be done best through the provision of facilities for training the sensibilities by the practice of one of the fine arts. Apart from the general question of developing the finer aspects of personality through artistic education, there is also the immediate utility of such education in developing our manual skill and perceptive sensibility. It is recognized today that education at pre-primary or nursery stage can be best imparted through training the child in the matching of colours, shapes and sizes. This releases the creative instinct in the child and thus diverts his superfluous energy from merely destructive channels into those of social behaviour and decorum. Thus, whether from the point of view of the training of the emotions or refinement of sentiments or development of manual skill and creative urge, the importance of art as an element of education cannot be overemphasised."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>From the Address at the first meeting of the Lalit Kala Akademi (National Academy of Arts). New Delhi, August 5, 1954

**S. RADHAKRISHNAN**

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## THE WORLD'S UNBORN SOUL

*T*O ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND one's age is an undertaking full of difficulties. No one who is in it can take a detached view of it. However, as rational beings, we cannot help asking what modern life in all its intense activity and rapid change signifies, what the sense of it all is, for, as Socrates tells us, the noblest of all investigations is the study of what man should be and what he should pursue.

Human history is not a series of secular happenings without any shape of pattern; it is a meaningful process, a significant development. Those who look at it from the outside are carried away by the wars and battles, the economic disorders and the political upheavals, but below in the depths is to be found the truly majestic drama, the tension between the limited effort of man and the sovereign purpose of the universe. Man cannot rest in an unresolved discord. He must seek for harmony, strive for adjustment. His progress is marked by a series of integrations, by the formation of more and more comprehensive harmonies. When any particular integration is found inadequate to the new conditions, he breaks it down and advances to a large whole. While civilization is always on the move, certain periods stand out clearly marked as periods of intense cultural change. The sixth century B.C., the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages and from the Middle Ages to modern times in Europe, were such periods. None of these, however, is comparable to the present tension and anxiety which are world-wide in character and extend to every aspect of human life. We seem to feel that the end of one period of civilization is slowly drawing into sight.

For the first time in the history of our planet its inhabitants have become one whole, each and every part of which is affected by the fortunes of every other. Science and technology, without aiming at this result, have achieved the unity. Economic and political phenomena are increasingly imposing on us the obligation to treat the world as a unit. Currencies are linked, commerce is international, political fortunes are interdependent. And yet the sense that mankind must become a community is still a casual whim, a vague aspiration, not generally

accepted as a conscious ideal or an urgent practical necessity moving us to feel the dignity of a common citizenship and the call of a common duty. Attempts to bring about human unity through mechanical means, through political adjustments, have proved abortive. It is only by these devices, not at any rate by them alone, that the unity of the human race can be enduringly accomplished.

The destiny of the human race, as of the individual, depends on the direction of its life forces, the lights which guide it, and the laws that mould it. There is a region beyond the body and the intellect, one in which the human spirit finds its expression in aspiration, not in formulas, a region where Plato enters when he frames his myths. It is called the soul of a being, the determining principle of body and mind. In the souls of men today there are clashing tides of colour and race, nation and religion, which create mutual antagonisms, myths, and dreams that divide mankind into hostile groups. Conflicts in human affairs are due to divisions in the human souls. The average general mind is respectful of the *status quo* and disinclined to great adventures, in which the security and isolation of the past have to be given up. It is not quite convinced by the moral collapse of the present system reposing on a ring of national egoisms held in check by mutual fear and hesitation, by ineffective treaties and futile resolutions of international tribunals. 'Do you imagine', asks Plato in *The Republic*, 'that political constitutions spring from a tree or a rock and not from a disposition of the citizens which turn the scale and draw all else in their direction?... The constitutions are as the men are and grow out of their characters'. A society can be remade only by changing man's hearts and minds. However much we may desire to make all things new, we cannot get away from our roots in the old.

The moulding influences of modern civilization, the spirit of science and rationalism, secular humanism and the sovereign State can be traced to the period of classical antiquity.

The Greeks laid the foundations of natural science for the European World. To analyse and explore, to test and prove all things in the light of reason, was the ambition of the Greek mind. No part of life is excluded from criticism by the dictates of the State or the scruples of the scriptures. The Greeks were the first to attempt to make life rational, to ask what is the right life for man and to apply the principles of reason and order to the chaos of primitive beliefs. Socrates warned us against the unexamined life and subjected the unanalysed catchwords of his time to careful scrutiny. He had firm faith that it is the nature of man to do right and walk straight. Human nature is fundamentally good, and the spread of enlightenment will abolish all wrong. Vice is only a miss, an error. We can learn to become good. Virtue is teachable.

Plato tells us that the universal or the general idea determines the nature of a particular individual and has greater reality than the latter.

The philosopher is one who seeks to escape from the realm of the transient and contemplates the world of real being freed from all confusion and error, which infect the objects of everyday experience. The world of ideas is the only realm of certainty in which man can dwell secure, freed from opinion and probability. The most obvious example of such truth is to be seen in the general propositions of mathematics.

Yet the Greek could never forget that his main concern was with man in his full concrete reality. His bodily desires should be given free play, his mental powers full scope. Every side of his nature should be developed so as to produce a harmony in which no part tyrannizes over the rest. Here is a definition of happiness attributed to Solon and approved by Herodotus. 'He is whole of limb, a stranger to disease, free from misfortune, happy in his children and comely to look upon. If in addition to all this he ends his life well, he is of a truth the man of whom thou art in search, the man who may rightly be termed happy.' The Greeks were not famous for their religious genius or moral fervour. We do not come across any hunger for the eternal or any passionate indignation against injustice. The main religion of the Greeks was the worship of the Olympian gods. Originally they were powers or forces of nature, though they soon became representative of human qualities. Dionysus, Aphrodite, Hermes, Artemis, each of them represents some quality of man. They were magnified human beings free from old age and death. Sometimes, as in Aeschylus, their justice and righteousness are insisted upon; but more often, as in Euripides, the gods display their might in a manner that defies all judgement by merely human standards, though it may be in conformity with the ways of natural forces. The sense of mystery was felt strongly in the presence of divine powers so long as they were conceived as natural forces, but it diminished somewhat when they were anthropomorphic. If we measure the nature of a religion by the sense of mystery it induces in its followers, the mythology of the Greeks is not religion of a high quality. The Sophists questioned the right of what religion taught to control man's conduct. It was at best a human convention.

Religious beliefs, however, were useful for political purposes. Some god or other guards every city with special care. The religious festivals were open to the Greeks and closed to others. If Socrates was executed and Anaxagoras exiled for attacking traditional beliefs, it was because of their unpatriotic impiety. It was more political oppression than religious persecution. If the Sophists did not for long subvert the piety of the ancients, if Epicurus admitted the existence of the gods, even while he denied them any part in the government of the world, if the Stoics with the most pronounced rationalism still employed the old religious dynamic, it was because they knew the social value of religion.

It is true that in Pythagoras and Plato, the Orphics and the Neoplatonists, mystic elements were found, but these tendencies were by no

means representative of the Greek spirit. Pindar and Pericles, Thucydides and Socrates, who represent the Greek genius at its best, with their visions of art and science, with their conceptions of civic life and aspirations, were essentially humanist thinkers. The mystery religions believed in the deification of man, and the typical Greek has no use for it. Pindar writes: 'Two things alone there are that cherish life's bloom to its utmost sweetness amid the fair flowers of wealth—to have good success and to win therefore fair fame. Seek not to be a God: if the portion of these honours falls to thee, thou hast already all. The things of mortals best befit mortality.' There are passages in Plato which ask us to mistrust our nature, to see in it an incurable taint, and exhorts us to live in the world of the unseen, but in them Plato is not voicing the Greek spirit.

Devotion to the city-State filled the spiritual vacuum in the Greek consciousness. The city was the unity of Greek society and claimed the devotion of its citizens. No Greek city was willing to submit to the leadership of another. The funeral oration of Pericles proclaims service of the *polis*, which is both Church and State in one, as the highest duty. Since each city had a consciousness of its own superiority, the Greeks failed to develop a larger loyalty towards a union of the whole Greek world. They could not organize and act together, and their lives were spent in violent conflicts of the mutually repellent autonomies. Plato, it is true, dreamed of an ideal society, but it was conceived as a city-State, not a commonwealth of mankind. Greek civilization came to an end mainly on account of its adherence to the false religion of patriotism. While it gave Europe the habit of disinterested pursuit of knowledge it also left her a negative legacy of the untenability of holding up patriotism as the highest virtue. With the disappearance of the city-State, Greek patriotism died or survived as public spirit. Rome, which succeeded Greece, was powerful for a time, but her religion had a special relation to the State. Worship was a public duty or civil function carried out by an official priesthood. The citizens may have their own private beliefs, so long as they publicly acknowledge the religion of the State. New worships were readily accepted and Rome soon became a museum of strange faiths. Besides, the dignity of the gods was greatly prejudiced when wielders of supreme power in the State like Julius Caesar and Augustus were deified. The political apotheosis removed the last shred of mystery from religion and made it into a 'national anthem'. Such a religion could neither satisfy the immortal longings of man nor supply the spiritual unity which could bind the different provinces of Rome. Each of them had its own religious forms and practices and despised those of its neighbours, and in the hour of her trial localism prevailed and Rome failed. By the time the old tradition broke down the new current of Christianity had set in.

The vital urge to the development of mediaeval culture, which attained high and beautiful expression in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,

was derived from the Judaic Christian conception of life. Some Hellenists are inclined to suggest that this movement is an unhappy interruption of human progress. It is said that Europe would have been a very different place, more humane and peace-loving, less given to national and racial feuds, cultural and religious strife, if the essential rationality and cosmopolitanism of the Stoics had been allowed to leaven the European world, if the persecutions of Marcus Aurelius had exterminated the Christian creed. Such speculations are profitless, for history has taken a different course. Nature obviously had a different intention.

Rome's military conquests brought her into contact with other communities and her spiritual poverty exposed her to foreign religious influences. After a period of struggle Christianity won. Even as Justinian's closure of the Schools of Athens defined the end of the ancient world, the conversion of Constantine gave an official recognition to the victory of Christianity. While retaining the Jewish beliefs in a living God and passion for righteousness, it absorbed Greek thought and Roman traditions.

Its two chief contributions to European thought are an insistence on the insufficiency of the intellectual and the importance of the historical. Both Judaism and Christianity take their stand on revelation. While for the most spiritual of Greek thinkers God was the 'idea of the Good', 'The First Mover', 'The Ruling Principle', 'Reason or Logos', for the Jews and the Christians, God is a supreme person who reveals His will to His law-givers and prophets. Christians believe in addition that God took the form of man and led a human life on earth. Again, while the greatest of Hellenic thinkers had no conception of history as a purposive process with a direction and a goal, but believed it to be a cyclic movement, the Jews had faith in an historical fulfilment. The Jewish consciousness lived in the intense expectation of some great decisive event which will be the definitive solution of the historical problem. The Messianic idea, which is the determining factor in Jewish history, survived in Christianity. The Christian view represents a blend of the Greek and the Jewish conceptions of the historical. In the works of St. Augustine, who stood at the meeting-point of the two worlds, the classical and the Christian, we find the struggle between the two conceptions. When he saw the great catastrophe happening before his eyes, the decay and death of the Roman Empire, the end of what seemed the most stable structure the world had seen, he pointed to the transcendent reality of God, the one changeless being above all the chances and changes of life. This is the central idea in his *Confessions*. The Jewish emphasis of the historical, and the Christian doctrine of incarnation are difficult to reconcile with the absolute and non-historical character of the godhead. The vigorous intellectual life of the Middle Ages was devoted to the explication of this problem and the finding of credible justifications for the other doctrines of the faith. In the theological writings of Thomas Aquinas we find an impressive attempt to



build a system of Christian theology with the aid of the cold logic of the Aristotelians. In spite of these great attempts, however, the problem still remains unsolved.

The very completeness of the edifice of thought raised by the Middle Ages left little room for undiscovered facts and paralysed thought.

When righteousness is practised, not for its own sake but because it is the will of God, it is practised with a fervour and a fanaticism that are sometimes ungodly. When the will of God is known, we feel driven to pass it on and think it intolerable that it should be disobeyed. 'The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?' While such a belief gives definiteness, conviction, and urgency to the ethical message, which no abstract logic could give, it at the same time shuts the door against all change and progress.

The Jews first invented the myth that only one religion could be true. As they, however, conceived themselves to be the 'Chosen People', they did not feel a mission to convert the whole world. The Jews gave to Christianity an ethical passion and a sense of superiority; the Greeks gave the vague aspirations and mysteries of the spirit a logical form, a dogmatic setting; the Romans with their practical bent and love of organization helped to institutionalize the religion. Their desire for world dominion transformed the simple faith of Jesus into a fiercely proselytizing creed. After the time of Constantine, authorities, clerical and secular, displayed systematic intolerance towards other forms or religious belief, taking shelter under the words 'He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth'.

And to this the idea that the Kingdom is not of this world and Augustine's distinction of the Two Cities and the World becomes a fleeting show, beauty a snare, and pleasure a temptation. The highest virtue is abstinence and mortification. 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he can be my disciple.' Under the shadow of this great renunciation social impulses declined and intellectual curiosity slackened.

The doctrine of the State as a divine creation was supported by the apostles and the Primitive Church. 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.' 'The powers that be are ordained of God.' It was one of the elementary duties of the Christians to pray for princes and other powers. The supremacy of the State obtained religious support.

The conquests of the Romans imposed unity on a large part of Europe and gave it a characteristic civilization with its laws and languages. Roman law still forms the basis of the codes of several European countries. Before the close of the fifth century the Roman Empire of the West had fallen before the arms of the northern invaders, and though a shadow of Rome's ancient power and name still survived at Constantinople, Europe had

lost its former political unity. But the idea of cultural unity was sustained to some extent by the Holy Roman Empire. Though there were local and feudal anarchy and a good deal of fighting in the Middle Ages, her greatest representatives, Charlemagne and Otto, Barbarossa and Hildebrand, Aquinas and Dante, believed in one Church and one Empire. The capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 destroyed the last remains of the Roman Empire in the East and ushered in a new era.

While mediaeval Christianity gave to Europe a sure sense of the reality of the unseen, which holds the key to the destiny of man and the clue to right conduct, and thus redeemed even the intellectual and artistic pagans from an easy, self-centred, and self-complacent superficiality, it imposed on Europe religious bigotry, which stifled free intellectual inquiry and fostered narrowness and obscurantism. But people whose physical and mental powers are unexhausted cannot remain content with such an order. The elements of a freer life gradually asserted themselves. Though the Middle Ages had lived in the shadow of antiquity and were more concerned with its forms than the spirit, still through a gradual inward ripening of the mind the easy and natural thought of the ancient Greeks, their exactitude of conception and experiment, attracted attention. The scholastic movement itself prepared the way for a rationalist revival. The greatest minds had a perception of the interrelations of the divine and the human. Dante tells us that divine providence has set before man two ends: blessedness of this life, which consists in the exercise of his natural powers, and blessedness of eternal life, which consists in the fruition of the vision of God. Religion and humanism are not opposites. Each needs the characteristic gifts and graces of the other. The recognition prepared the way for the belief in the perfectibility of man and society which was later raised to the rank of a dogma.

The Renaissance is the great age of disintegration and rebirth, when for good or ill the organic unity of life of the Middle Ages, derived from its religious orientation, passed away, and the new world of Copernicus and Columbus, of Luther and Calvin, of Galileo and Descartes, of Machiavelli and Henry VIII, came to birth. The history of the last four hundred years in Europe has been a simultaneous growth in political freedom, economic prosperity, intellectual advancement, and social reform, but it has also been a slow and sure decay of traditional religion morality and social order. If in one sense it has been a progress, in other it has been a reaction, marked by a departure from the authentic foundations of life. A new civilization, based on the three Greek ideals of rationalist philosophy, humanist ethics, and nationalist politics, has been growing up.

The Renaissance gave back to Europe the free curiosity of the Greek mind, its eager search for first principles as well as the Roman's large practicality and sense for the ordering of life in harmony with social utility. These were pursued with a passion, a seriousness, an almost religious

ardour, which Europe acquired during the long centuries of mediaeval religious discipline.

Under the influence of the new movement aiming at a complete rehabilitation of the human spirit, science started on its unfettered career. The sky changed with Copernicus, and the habitable world with the explorers. The scientific and technological achievements cast the world into a closely knit unity and modern history slowly grew into the stature of world history.

Philosophical thought was moulded by the prestige of science. The reassertion of the mental habits of the Græco-Roman world dates from Descartes, who rejects all that his intellect cannot include. He tries to put an end to the capricious multifariousness of opinion by the practice of the critical method. Truth is contained only in that which can be recognized clearly and distinctly. What is unclear and mysterious is not true. Truth lies where all men think alike, in judgements of universal validity. Mathematics is the great example of ideal truth. Spinoza, like Kant, aimed at a strictly scientific metaphysics and clothed his thoughts in the form of geometrical propositions. Metaphysics should be strict science and contain no arbitrariness. 'Truth', says Spinoza, 'would be eternally hidden from the human race, had not mathematics, which deals, not with ends, but with the nature and properties of figures, shown to man another norm of truth.' So he treats of God, understanding, and human passions as though they were circles and triangles. Nature becomes an enormous silent machine which is indifferent to the values of man. Even if we call the former by the name of God, it does not come nearer the human being. 'For the reason and will which constitute God's essence must differ by the breadth of all heaven from our reason and will have nothing in common with them, except the name; as little, in fact, as the dog star has in common with the dog, the barking animal.' Leibniz breaks up the one world of Spinoza into an infinitely large number of parts which move according to eternally existing laws and have neither the right nor the power to alter, by a hair's breadth, the order which is independent of them. Kant raises the question whether a science of metaphysics with a logical structure like that of the well-established mathematical and natural sciences is possible. These latter have acquired a scientific character on account of the universal rules, the synthetic *a priori* judgements, which they employ. Since these rules are applicable only within the limits of possible experience, metaphysics, which aims at the transcendent, is an impossibility. The passion for law, for rule, dominates Kant's philosophy. Rule expresses truth and justifies conduct. An action is right if we so act that the principle of it can be made a general rule. Hegel does not ask whether it is necessary for metaphysics to be a science, but strengthens the belief in the autonomy of reason. For him philosophy is the self-development of the spirit, its natural and necessary unfolding.

The English school of empiricism would get rid of all ideas which do not correspond to actual facts, of all propositions which cannot be tested by experience. Locke wished to rid philosophy of futile speculations into the inscrutable. In his hands even natural science becomes uncertain. 'In physical things', says he, 'scientific knowledge will still be out of our reach.' Sense is the only way of knowing, and it cannot give us certainty. Though his intellectual successor Berkeley imported a theological impulse to his empiricism and admitted the reality of spirits, human and divine, Hume developed the logical implications of the empirical attitude when he left us with a world of impressions and ideas about whose origin and significance we know next to nothing. The successors of the rationalist and empirical schools today are dominated by the scientific method. Some of the recent writings of realists remind us of human analysis and scepticism. A contemporary German thinker, Husserl, says that it is his desire 'to discover a radical beginning of a philosophy' which, to repeat the Kantian phrase, will be able to present itself as science 'to furnish philosophy with a scientific beginning'. The infallibility of the Church had yielded to the infallibility of scientific reason. As it in its turn seems to be failing us, we are in a tide of reaction against it. The different philosophical tendencies of voluntarism, pragmatism, and vitalism are indications of the transition from the predominantly rationalistic period of human development.

To conserve the ancient wisdom and practise the ancient virtue was the ambition of the humanist thinkers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They aimed at an escape from a life regulated by rigid ecclesiastical tradition into one of joyous freedom and unfettered spontaneity. Earthly life becomes the object of all striving and action. The critical spirit helps us to see the relativism of all moral codes. We refuse to be satisfied by mere statements about right and wrong, but ask for their reasons. We long for freedom from convention, mistaking it for real freedom. Conventions are said to be mere inhibitions and habits an orthodoxy. A cold dissection of the deepest things men have lived by ends in libertarian experiments in morals. Intellectual and artistic refinement places no check on brutal lust and savage passions. The faith that the spread of reason will abolish all irrational outbursts has disappeared. There is more violence, oppression, and crudity than there used to be. Man tries to rule his conduct by means external to himself, by technique and not self-control. Morality as an individual regeneration, an inner transformation, is not accepted.

Under the influence of the democratic conception of the right of all individuals as members of the society to the full life and development of which they are individually capable, the old landed economy of feudalism broke up, and the new money economy with the beginnings of economic individualism and the promise of modern industrialism developed. The

release of the middle classes, which was effected by the abolition of privilege and feudalism, was succeeded by the claim of the working classes, to a fair share in the wealth they produce. Liberal attempts to free the workers from their ignorance, isolation, and poverty by gradual humanitarian legislation and increased taxation seemed to be very slow, and a new programme of abolishing capitalism, which is said to be the root cause of all political and social evils, by persuasion and constitutional methods if possible and by violence and revolution if necessary, became more popular. Everywhere a tendency towards state absolutism has been growing. The pressure of society on the individual is not less effective today than it was in the days of barbarism. The view that social discipline is intended to assist the development of the innate goodness in man, which he does not altogether abandon even when his nature is heated by passion, finds little support. Coercion becomes justified both within and without the State.

The influence of the Renaissance aided the breaking of the power of the Papacy, in the establishment of Protestantism, and the right of free inquiry. Luther put the Bible in place of the infallible Church and held it to be an unerring expression of God's relation to man. The Reformation insists on the right of the individual reason to determine the sense of the inspired scripture. Though in theory the interpretation of the Bible was left to the individual thinker, in practice the members of the different Churches were required to accept their varying interpretations of the contents of the Bible. Each Church thought itself to be the special depository of the only true exposition of the perfect will of God.

From the philosophical side, attacks were made on the traditional religion. If the world is an expression of law, if the universe is mechanical in character, God is necessary perhaps to set up the machinery which can work of itself. He is only the architect of the world. The theism of the Middle Ages lapses into deism. If the machine can work of itself it can also set itself up and start working.

While the philosophers of the Enlightenment and German Idealism attempt to reconcile Christian truth with the findings of reason, Schleiermacher sets out to prove that it is in conformity with the conditions of religious consciousness. Ritschl tries to establish that it is consistent with the cultural ethos. Thus Christian theology, which was once based on a sovereign act of God transcending all human powers of comprehension, gets steadily rationalized and is recommended on the ground that it can be reconciled with scientific truth and ethical values. The latter thus became more important than the revelation itself. The new spirit, which questioned the conventional form of religion and the meditation of the priesthood between God and man, could not fail to go forward and question the scripture itself, and then all sense of the supernatural.

Humanism is the religion of the majority of the intellectuals today. Most of us who profess to be religious do so by habit, sentiment, or inertia. We accept our religion even as we do the Bank of England or the illusion of progress. We profess faith in God but are not inclined to act on it. We know the forms of thought but do not have the substance of conviction. When men have lost the old faith and have not yet found anything solid to put in its place, superstition grows. The long-starved powers of the soul reassert their claims and shift the foundations of our mind. The weak, the wounded, and the overstrained souls turn to psycho-analysis, which deals with the problems of the soul under the guise of rationality and with the prestige of science. It tells us that man is only rational in part. The authoritarian creeds, which take us back to pre-Renaissance days, appeal to those who find the life of pure reason so utterly disconcerting. Revivals overtake us, and we yield to them in the faith that something is better than nothing. The age is distracted between new knowledge and old belief, between the cheap godless naturalism of the intellectuals and the crude revivals of the fundamentalists. As piety in any real sense has been effectively destroyed for large numbers, the national State absorbs all their energies and emotions, social, ethical and religious.

The State which is the most powerful organization is least hampered by inner scruples or outer checks. Man in the community is at least half-civilized, but the State is still primitive, essentially a huge beast of prey. We have no strong public opinion, or effective international law, to restrain the predatory State. The fear of defeat or of a disastrous breakdown is all that prevents an outburst.

Nations have become mysterious symbols to whose protection we rally as savages to fetishes. They claim to be enduring entities each sufficient to itself and independent of the rest. They are trained to believe that there would be no impoverishment of the world if other nations perished and they themselves were left intact. Speaking of Athens, Pericles says: 'We of the present generation have made our City in all respects most self-sufficient to meet the demands of peace or war.' If the modern Frenchman, German, or American is sincerely convinced of his own immeasurable superiority to the 'lesser breeds without the law', and proclaims himself as the source and consummation of world civilization, he is only the spiritual heir of the Greeks and the Jews. While Plato knew that patriotism was not enough, that it was something of a pious fraud, he yet commended it on grounds of social expediency. For him barbarians were enemies by nature, and it was not improper to wage war on them even to the point of enslaving or extirpating them. The influence of the Jews, who were intensely conscious of being not as other men are, helped to strengthen the sacred egoism of the nation. Paul reaffirmed the dichotomy when he divided 'vessels of mercy afore prepared

into glory' from 'vessels of wrath fitted to destruction' on the basis of religion, and patriotism used it for its purposes. The antitheses of the Greek and the barbarian, of the Jew and the Gentile, of Nordic and non-Nordic, have all a family likeness. Only the other day did we hear a great leader declare that 'Germany is our religion', the glory of the blood and soil of 'eternal Germany' is the sole purpose of existence justifying any sacrifice of individual liberty and thought. These resounding appeals for national hegemony and racial domination have a common origin and accent.

What then is the position today? Uncertainty, a fundamental agnosticism, a sense of uneasiness that we are hastening confusedly to unknown ends. In his famous cartoon *The Twentieth Century Looks at the Future*, Max Beerbohm depicts a tall, well-dressed, somewhat stooping figure looking out over a wide landscape at a large question-mark which hangs over the distant horizon like a malignant star. The future is incalculable. We do not know what we want. In previous periods men had a clear conception of the goal they were aiming at. It is either a life of reason or a triumph of religion or a return to old perfection. We are aware of the emptiness and the profaneness of our life, but not of a way of escape from it. Some advise us to retain our respect for reason and submit to fate. Others tell us that the task is too much for man and we are only to wait for a saviour who alone can set right the disorder in the heart of things. Some gaze back in spirit to the mellow vistas of the nineteenth century, of industrial prosperity, colonial expiation, and liberal humanitarianism, honestly persuaded that the world was better off under the guidance of men of birth and breeding, and are prepared to fight a last battle for authority and order. A vision of the mediaeval order with Church and theocracy, militarism and despotism for its principles is sometimes held up before us. All these efforts are irrelevant to our times. They are like doses of morphia which give us temporary relief but cause permanent injury to the health. Neither a contended fatalism nor religious expectancy, nor reversions to the past can give meaning to a world which is in search of its soul. The slow dying of the old order need not fill us with despair, as it is the law of all nature that life comes only by death. Every civilization is an experiment in life, an essay in creation, to be discarded when done with. With the infinite patience of one who has endless time and limitless resources at her absolute command, Nature slowly, hesitatingly, often wastefully, goes on her triumphant way. She takes up an idea, works out its form till, at the moment of its perfect expression, it reveals some fundamental flow, and then breaks it up again to begin anew a different pattern. Yet in some way the wisdom and spirit of all past forms enter into those which succeed them and inspire the gradual evolution of the purpose of history.

Today the soul of man no longer rests upon secure foundations. Everything around him is unsteady and contradictory. His soul has

become more complicated, his spirit more bitter, and his outlook more bewildered. But his unrest is not a mere negative force. He is not only oppressed by new doubts but is inspired by new horizons, new perspectives, and a thirst for new relations with fellow men. He has reached a more advanced state of spiritual maturity, and so the dogmas of traditional religions are no longer able to answer his questions or overcome his doubts. The present profound *malaise* is really a form of growing pains. The new world for which the old is in travail is still like an embryo. The components are all there; what is lacking is the integration, the completeness which is organic consciousness, the binding together of the different elements, making them breathe and come to life. We cannot live by instinct, habit, or emotion. We need a rational faith to sustain a new order of life and rescue us from our mental fog and spiritual anxiety.

The great periods of human history are marked by a widespread access of spiritual vitality derived from the fusion of national cultures with foreign influences. If we take Judaism we find that Abraham came from Mesopotamia and Joseph and Moses from Egypt. Later, Judaism shows the influence of Hellenism. Asia Minor and Egypt exercised considerable influence over the Greek development. The creative genius of the mediaeval world came from Palestine. The transition to the modern world was marked by the recovery of the ancient. In times of trouble we draw the profoundest inspiration from sources outside us, from the newly recovered past or the achievement of men under different skies. So, perhaps, the civilizations of the East, their religions and ethics, may offer us some help in negotiating difficulties that we are up to. The only past known to the Europeans emerging from the Middle Ages was the Biblical, and the Graeco-Roman and their classics happen to be the subjects studied in the great universities founded in that period. Now that we have the whole world for our cultural base, the process of recovery and training in classics cannot cease with listening to the voices of Isaiah and Paul, Socrates and Cicero. That would be an academic error, a failure of perspective. There are others also who have participated in the supreme adventure of the ages, the prophets of Egypt, the sages of China, and the seers of India, who are guide-posts disclosing to us the course of the trail. Of the living non-European civilizations, the chief are the Islamic, the Chinese and the Hindu. The Islamic has the same historical background as Judaism and Christianity, which is well known in the West. The humanist civilization of China was considerably affected by the religious conceptions of India, especially the Buddhist. Religion, however, has been the master passion of the Hindu mind, a lamp unto its feet and a light unto its path, the presupposition and basis of its civilization, the driving force of its culture, and the expression—in spite of its tragic failures, inconsistencies, division, and degradations—of its life in God. In the West, even in the most sympathetic quarters, Hindu thought is in general a subject for respectful but in every sense distant homage, not of living concern. The



institution of this Chair by the far-sighted generosity of Mr and Mrs Spalding—which is a sign of the times, pregnant with meaning—and the unprecedented appointment of an Asiatic to an Oxford Chair are motived, I take it, by a desire to lift Eastern thought from its sheltered remoteness and indicate its enduring value as a living force in shaping the soul of the modern man.

Hinduism adopts a rationalist attitude in the matter of religion. It tried to study the facts of human life in a scientific spirit, not only the obvious facts, the triumphs and defeats of men who sleep in spiritual unconsciousness, but the facts of life's depths. Religion is not so much a revelation to be attained by us in faith as an effort to unveil the deepest layers of man's being and get into enduring contact with them.

The religions of the world can be distinguished into those which emphasize the object and those which insist on experience. For the first class religion is an attitude of faith and conduct directed to a power without. For the second it is an experience to which the individual attaches supreme value. The Hindu and the Buddhist religions are of this class. For them religion is salvation. It is more a transforming experience than a notion of God. Real religion can exist without a definite conception of the deity but not without a distinction between the spiritual and the profane, the sacred and the secular. Even in primitive religion, with its characteristic phenomena of magic, we have religion, though not a belief in God. In theistic systems the essential thing is not the existence of the deity, but its power to transform man. *Bodhi* or enlightenment, which Buddha attained and his followers aim at, is an experience. Perfect insight (*Sambodhi*) is the end and aim of the Buddhist eight-fold path. There are systems of Hindu thought like the *Samkhya* and the Jaina which do not admit God but affirm the reality of the spiritual consciousness. There are theists like Ramanuja for whom the spiritual consciousness, though not God Himself, is the only way in which God can be known. All, however, are agreed in regarding salvation as the attainment of the true status of the individual. Belief and conduct, rites and ceremonies, authorities and dogma, are assigned a place subordinate to the art of conscious self-discovery and contact with the divine. This distinctiveness of the Hindu religion was observed even by the ancients. Philostratus puts in the mouth of Apollonius of Tyana these words: 'all wish to live in the nearness of God, but only the Hindus bring it to pass'.

To say that God exists means that spiritual experience is attainable. The possibility of the experience constitutes the most conclusive proof of the reality of God. God is 'given', and is the factual content of the spiritual experience. All other proofs are descriptions of God, matters of definition, and language. The fact of God does not depend on mere human authority or evidence from alleged miraculous events. The authority of scripture, the traditions of the Church, or the casuistries of school-men who proclaim but do not prove, may not carry conviction to many of us who are the

children of science and reason, but we must submit to the fact of spiritual experience, which is primary and positive. We may dispute theologies, but cannot deny facts. The fire of life in its visible burning compels assent, though not the fumbling speculations of smokers sitting around the fire.

While realization is the fact, the theory of reality is an inference. There is difference between contact with reality and opinion about it, between the mystery of godliness and belief in God. A man may know much about theology but yet be lacking in the spirit of religion. The Hindu thinkers warn us against rationalistic self-sufficiency. The learned run far more risks than the unlearned. There are two ways in which we deceive ourselves; the easy way of the unlearned who believe that the world he sees is all, and the laborious ways of the learned who establish the truth of naturalism and are deceived by the definite. Both of them succeed in shutting us away from the reality of our being.

The process of self-discovery is not the result of intellectual analysis but of the attainment of a human integrity reached by a complete mastery over nature. The old faith in mere reason that we will act properly if we think rightly is not true. Mere knowledge is of the nature of a decoration, an exhibit with no root. It does not free the mind. In the *Chandogya Upanisad* Narada confesses that all his scriptural learning has not taught him the true nature of the self, and in the same *Upanisad*, *Svetaketu*, in spite of his study of the scriptures for the prescribed period, is said to be merely conceited and not well instructed. Spiritual attainment is not the perfection of the intellectual man but an energy pouring into it from beyond it, vivifying it. The *Katha Upanisad* says: 'As the self-existent pierced the openings of the senses outward, one looks outward, not within himself. A certain thoughtful person, seeking immortality, turned the eye inward and saw the self.' It is seeing with the spiritual eye of the pure in heart, who have overcome the passions of greed and envy, hatred and suspicion, that is here insisted on. This is the fulfilment of man's life, where every aspect of his being is raised to its highest point, where all the senses gather, the whole mind leaps forward and realizes in one quivering instant such things as cannot be easily expressed. Though it is beyond the word of tongue or concept of mind, the longing and love of the soul, its desire and anxiety, its seeking and thinking, are filled with the highest spirit. This state of being or awareness to which man could attain is the meaning of human life. It is religion, and not mere argument about it, that is the ultimate authority for one's ideas of God and life. God is not an intellectual idea or a moral principle, but the deepest consciousness from whom ideas and rules derive. He is not a logical construction but the perceived reality present in each of us and giving to each of us the reality we possess. We are saved not by creeds but by gnosis, *jñāna*, or spiritual wisdom. This is the result of the remaking of man. Logical knowledge is comparable to a finger which points to the object and disappears when the object is seen. True knowledge is

awareness, a perception of the identity with the supreme, a clear-sighted intuition, a dawning of insight into that which logic infers and scriptures teach. An austere life turns knowledge into wisdom, a pundit into a prophet.

This is not, however, to attribute strength to sentiment, or derive illumination from ignorance. The truth of the experience does not arise from the mystery of its origin or the delight it causes in us. It is due to the fact that it satisfies our wants, including the intellectual, and thus gives peace of mind to the individual and contributes to the social harmony of the community. He who enters into an awareness of the real is the complete man whose mind is serene and whole being at rest. It is essential for us to seize and sift our intuitions, for the dangers of mistaking paradoxes for discoveries, metaphors for proofs, and words for truth are quite serious. If we are suspicious of the claims of intelligence we will land in a self-satisfied obscurantism. Any experience which does not fit in with tested knowledge must be rejected as hocus-pocus. To be spiritual is not to reject reason but to go beyond it. It is to think so hard that thinking becomes knowing or viewing, what we might call creative thinking. Philosophy and religion are two aspects of a single movement.

This view is humanistic in a deeper sense. It looks upon religion as a natural development of a really human life. Man, no doubt, is the measure of all things; only his nature contains or reflects every level of reality from matter to God. He is a many-levelled being. He may identify himself with his animal nature, the physical and the physiological, or with that self-conscious reason. The sub-rational vital aims, however indispensable and valuable in their own place, cannot without disaster take control of a being who after all is not and cannot be a mere animal. In the thought and life of the modern man self-conscious intellect, with its clear analysis and limited aims takes the highest place, and suicidal scepticism is the result; for while it accepts the evidence of the senses and the results of judgement and inference, it rejects as spurious and subjective the deeper intuitions which discursive reason must take for granted. Faith in conceptual reason is the logical counterpart of the egoism which makes the selfish ego the deadliest foe of the soul. True humanism tells us that there is something more in man than is apparent in his ordinary consciousness, something which frames ideals and thoughts, a finer spiritual presence, which makes him dissatisfied with mere earthly pursuits. The one doctrine that has the longest intellectual ancestry is the belief that the ordinary condition of man is not his ultimate being, that he has in him a deeper self, call it breath or ghost, soul or spirit. In each being dwells a light which no power can extinguish, an immortal spirit, benign and tolerant, the silent witness in his heart. The greatest thinkers of the world unite in asking us to know the self. Mencius declares: 'Who knows his own nature knows heaven'. St. Augustine writes: 'I, Lord, went wandering like a strayed sheep, seeking thee with anxious

reasoning without, whilst thou wast within me... I went round the streets and squares of the city of this world seeking thee, and I found thee not, because in vain I sought without for him who was within myself.' We make a detour round the universe to get back to the self. The oldest wisdom in the world tells us that we can consciously unite with the divine while in this body, for this is man really born. If he misses his destiny, Nature is not in a hurry; she will catch him some day and compel him to fulfil her secret purpose. Truth, beauty, peace, power, and wisdom are all attributes of the divine self which awaits our findings.

What is our true self? While our bodily organization undergoes changes, while our thoughts gather like clouds in the sky and disperse again, the self is never lost. It is present in all, yet distinct from all. Its nature is not affected by ordinary happenings. It is the source of the sense of identity through numerous transformations. It remains itself though it sees all things. It is the one thing that remains constant and unchanged in the incessant and multiform activity of the universe, in the slow changes of the organism, in the flux of sensations, in the dissipation of ideal, the fading of memories. Our personality, which we generally take for our self, is conscious only by fits and starts. There are large gaps in it, without consciousness. The seer always exists. Even if death comes, the seer cannot die. 'When the sun and the moon have both set, the fire has gone out, and speech has stopped, *Yajñavalkya*, what serves as the light for a man? The self serves as his light (*atmairasya jyotir bhavati*). It is through the light of the self that he sits, goes out, works, and returns.' Nothing on the object side can touch the subject. Feelings and thoughts are on the same plane as objects and events insofar as they are observable. Things can be different from what they are without the self being different from itself. This persisting self which is universal seer to all things seen, this essential awareness which nothing has the power to suppress, which knows nothing of having been born as it knows nothing of dying, which is the loss of all knowledge, of dreams and ecstasies, is, says Samkara, not capable of proof, nor does it need any, for it is self-proven (*svasiddha*). Though itself inconceivable, it is the ground of every possibility of conceiving, of every act of knowledge. Even he who denies it presupposes it insofar as he thinks. It is not an organ or a faculty but that which vivifies and disposes every organ and every faculty, the vast background of our being in which all organs, intellect, and will lie. Body, mind, and the world are almost arbitrary restrictions imposed on this consciousness. This universal self is in our ordinary life obscured by psychological impurities and fluctuations and becomes confused with the empirical self. The latter, which is a system of energies, psychological and logical, lays claim to perfect independence and individuality, little knowing that it can conserve itself only by perpetual change. We take our personality to be our most intimate and deepest possession, our sovereign good. But it belongs to the object side, itself shaped by relative happenings, mutable

and accidental, as compared with the self. We can think about it, calculate its interests, sacrifice them on occasions. It is a sort of psychological being that answers to our name, is reflected in the looking-glass (*namarupa*) a number in statistical tables. It is subject to pleasure and pain, expands when praised, contracts when criticized, admires itself, and is lost in the masquerade. The *Mundaka Upanisad* makes a distinction between the two birds which dwell in the same tree, one eating the sweet fruit and the other looking on without eating. The fanner is the empirical self and the latter the transcendental self.

The phenomenal character of the empirical self and the world answering to it is denoted by the world *maya*, which signifies the fragility of the universe. *Maya* does not mean that the empirical world with the selves in it is an illusion, for the whole effort of the cosmos is directed to and sustained by the one supreme self, which though distinct from everything it implicated in everything. The criticism that Hindu thought is pantheistic makes out that the supreme being, which is complete and impenetrable, is yet filled with things which live, breathe, and move each according to its nature. Nothing can be born, exist, or die in any degree, nothing can have time, place, form, or meaning, except on this universal background.

*Maya* is a term employed also to indicate the tendency to identify ourselves with our apparent selves and become exiled from our spiritual consciousness with its maximum of clarity and certainty. This tendency is the expression of the working of self-conscious reason. Intellectual activities are derivation, a selection, and, so long as they are cut off from the truth which is their secret source, a deformation of true knowledge (*avidya*) which has its natural result in selfishness. The aim of all human living is self-definition. It is to isolate the substantial permanence which each finite life possesses deep down from the strife of empirical happenings. We can exceed the limit within which human consciousness normally functions. Man can abstract from his body and flesh, from his feelings and desires, even from thoughts which rise like waves on the surface of his mind, and reach a pure awareness, the naked condition of his pure selfhood. By steady discipline he can be led back to the pure being, the subject that reflects, and reach that state of immediacy and unity in which all chaos disappears. When we break through the ring of smoke round the self, unwrap the sheaths which cover it, we achieve here and now in the flesh the destiny of our being. The 'I', the *atman*, the universal self, infinitely simple, is a trinity of transcendent reality (*sat*), awareness (*cit*), and freedom (*ananda*). Such is the way in which we formulate in intellectual terms the truth of our own being to which our ordinary consciousness is now alien. We recommend to others this truth by conceiving of it as pure super personality or cosmic personality manifesting the universe. The negative method which requires us to give up the

creaturely, to divest ourselves of all qualities, push slowly out beyond all distinctions, reveals the inexpressible sanctity of the experience. This exaltation, this motionless concentration, this holy calm and deep sea at rest, reflecting heaven on its surface, or, in the image of the *Bhagavadgita*, 'still as a flame in a windless place', bathed as it were in an incomprehensible brightness (*tejas*), is hard to describe. An austere reticence or a negative account is all that is open to us. When however, we lapse back from this state into our ordinary consciousness, we represent the self as another with its transcendent majesty. We quake and shiver, bleed and moan with a longing gaze at it. We dare not even lift up our eyes. We are filled with a desire to escape from the world of discord and struggle. In this mood we represent the supreme as the sovereign personality encompassing this whole world, working through the cosmos and ourselves for the realization of the universal kingdom. If the personal concept is more prominent, the individual seeks his development in a humble, trustful submission to God. We may adopt the mode of *bhakti* or devotion, or the method of *jnana* or contemplation by which the self, set free from all that is not self, regains its pure dignity.

The attainment of spiritual status when refracted in the logical universe appears as a revelation of grace.

Samkara brings out clearly the distinction between the absolute self, the divine person, and the human individual:

'Therefore the unconditioned self, being beyond speech and mind, undifferentiated and one, is designated as "not this, not this"; when it has the limiting adjuncts of the body and organs which are characterized by imperfect knowledge, desire, and work, it is called the empirical individual self; and when the self has the limitation of the creative power manifesting through eternal and unlimited knowledge, it is called the inner ruler and divine person. The same self, as by its nature transcendent, absolute, and is called the immutable and supreme self.'

When we seek to grasp the reality superpersonal in itself, personal from the cosmic end, by conceptual methods, we must note that logically precise formulas are at best provisional and incomplete. The definiteness and transparency of the symbols do not mean that the thing signified has been grasped completely. Those who have no contact with reality, no insight into truth, accept the relative symbol for the absolute truth. In their self-confident jugglery with symbols and definitions they forget the thing itself. Only the background of reality can transform the empty sounds of words into significant expressions of truth. Our pictures of God have no reality save a spiritual one. They are not in things outside ourselves. 'The mortal made the immortal', says the *Rg Veda*. The Indian monk Bodhidharma, in the sixth century of our era, said to the emperor Leang Wu Ti: 'There is no Buddha outside the spirit. Save the reality of the spirit all is imaginary. The spirit is the Buddha and the Buddha is

the spirit. To imagine a Buddha outside the spirit, to conceive that he is seen in an external place is but delirium.' The distinction of superpersonal and personal, *nirguna* and *saguna*, is found in all mysticism, Eastern or Western. If Samkara distinguishes *brahman* from *isvara*, Eckhart contrasts the Godhead (*Deitas*) with God (*Deus*). While God is the personal triune God of Church doctrine, which 'becomes and dis-becomes', the pure Godhead stands high above God, and is the ground of the possibility of God, who is absorbed in the Godhead, which is beyond being and goodness.

The manifold universe is not an illusion; it is being, though of a lower order, subject to change, waxing and waning, growing and shrinking. Compare again, 'He who dwells in the Earth, who is other than the Earth, whom the Earth does not know, whose body the Earth is, who controls the Earth from within, he is yourself, the inner controller, the immortal.' This is said to be true of all things in the world, subjective and objective, which are the manifestations of the 'unseen seer.'

When man apprehends the supreme being, returns to the concrete, and controls his life in the light of its truth, he is a complete man. He reaches an almost inconceivable universality. All his powers which have been hitherto bound up with narrow pursuits are liberated for larger ends. The doctrine of *maya* tells us that we fall away from our authentic being if we are low in the world of empirical objects and earthly desires, turning our back on the reality, which gives them value. They are so alluring that they provoke ardent desires, but they cannot satisfy the inner being, and in the world outside they break forth into frantic disorder. This does not mean that we have to neglect worldly welfare or despise body and mind. The body is a necessity for the soul. A system which believes in rebirth cannot despise bodily life, for every soul has need of it. Personal life is not to be repressed in order to gain the end of religion. It is to be recreated and purified in the light of the higher truth. He in whom the spark of spirit glows grows into a new man, the man of God, the transfigured person. The divine penetrates his self, wells up and flows through him, absorbing him and enriching him within it. God is not for him another self. He is the real self closer than his own ego. 'I live, yet not I, but it is Christ who liveth in me.' In the order of nature, he keeps up his separate individuality; in the order of spirit, the divine has taken hold of him, remoulding his personality. The pride of a self-conscious individual yields to the humility of a God-centred one. He works in the world with the faith that life in its pure quality is always noble and beautiful and only its frustration evil.

The fundamental truths of a spiritual religion are that our real self is the supreme being, which it is our business to discover and consciously become, and this being is one in all. The soul that has found itself is no longer conscious of itself in its isolation. It is conscious rather of the universal life of which all individuals, races, and nations are specific

articulations. A single impulsion runs beneath all the adventures and aspirations of man. It is the soul's experience of the essential unity with the whole of being that is brought out in the words, 'Thou in me and I in thee.' Fellowship is life, lack of fellowship death. The secret solidarity of the human race we cannot escape from. It cannot be abolished by the passing insanities of the world. Those who are anxious to live in peace with their own species and all life will not find it possible to gloat over the massacres of large numbers of men simply because they do not belong to their race or country. Working for a wider, all-embracing vision they cut across the artificial ways of living, which seduce us from the natural springs of life. Our normal attitudes to other races and nations are no more than artificial masks, habits of thought and feeling, sedulously cultivated by long practice in dissimulation. The social nature of man is distorted into queer shapes by the poison poured into his blood which turns him into a hunting animal. Racialism and nationalism, which require us to exercise our baser passions, to bully and cheat, to kill and loot, all with a feeling that we are profoundly virtuous and doing God's work, are abhorrent to the spiritually awakened. For them all races and nations lie beneath the same arch of heaven. They proclaim a new social relationship and serve a new society with civil liberties for all individuals, and political freedom for all nations, great and small.

The collapse of a civilization built on the audacities of speculative doubt, moral impressionism, and the fierce and confused enthusiasms of races and nations need not dishearten us, for it has in it elements of an anti-social and anti-moral character, which deserve to perish. It is directed to the good, not of mankind as a whole, but of a powerful privileged few among individuals as well as nations. Whatever is valuable in it will enter into the new world which is struggling to be born. In spite of all appearances to the contrary, we discern in the present unrest the gradual dawning of a great light, a converging life-endeavour, a growing realization that there is a secret spirit in which we are all one, and of which humanity is the highest vehicle on earth, and an increasing desire to live out this knowledge and establish a kingdom of spirit on earth. Science has produced the necessary means for easy transport of men and communication of thought. Intellectually the world is bound together in a web of common ideas and reciprocal knowledge. Even the obstacles of religious dogma are not so formidable as they were in the past. The progress of thought and criticism is helping the different religions to sound the note of the eternal, the universal, the one truth of spirit which life obeys, seeks for, and delights in at all times and in all places. We are able to see a little more clearly that the truth of religion is not what is singular and private to it, is not the mere letter of the law which its priests are apt to insist on, and its faithful to fight for, but that part of it which it is capable of sharing with all others. Humanity's ultimate realization of itself and of the world can be attained only by an ever increasing liberation



of the values that are universal and human. Mankind is still in the making. Human life as we have it is only the raw material for human life as it might be. There is a hitherto undreamed of fullness, freedom, and happiness within reach of our species, if only we can pull ourselves together and go forward with a high purpose and fine resolve. What we require is not professions and programmes but the power of spirit in the hearts of men, a power which will help us to discipline our passions of greed and selfishness and organize the world which is at one with us in desire.\*

## MAHATMA GANDHI

### A GIANT AMONG MEN

This Little Man, so frail in appearance, was a giant among men, measured by the greatness of his soul. By his side other men, very important and famous men, big in their own way, big in their space and time, look small and insignificant. His profound sincerity of spirit, his freedom from hatred and malice, his mastery over himself, his human, friendly, all-embracing charity, his strong conviction which he shared with the great ones of history that the martyrdom of the body is nothing compared with the defilement of the soul, a conviction which he successfully put to the test in many dramatic situations, show the impact of religion on life, the impact of the eternal values on the shifting problems of the world of time.

The inspiration of his life has been what is commonly called religion, religion not in the sense of subscription to dogmas or conformity to ritual, but religion in the sense of an abiding faith in the absolute values of truth, love and justice and a persistent endeavour to realize them on earth. Once I asked him to state his view of religion. He expressed it in these words: "I often describe my religion as Religion of Truth. Of late, instead of saying God is Truth, I have been saying Truth is God, in order more fully to define my religion... Nothing so completely describes my God as Truth. Denial of God we have known. Denial of Truth we have not known. The most ignorant among mankind have some Truth in them. We are all sparks of Truth. The sum total of these sparks is indescribable, as yet unknown Truth which is God. I am being daily led nearer to it by constant prayer."

In the *Upanishads*, the Supreme is said to be Truth, Knowledge and Eternity. God is the Lord of Truth, *Satyanaarayan*. "I am," says Gandhi, "but a seeker after Truth. I claim to have found the way to it. I claim to be making a ceaseless effort to find it. To find Truth completely is to realize

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\*Inaugural lecture at the University of Oxford on October 20, 1936. Included in *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*. Pp. 1-34

oneself and one's destiny, in other words, to become perfect. I am painfully conscious of my imperfection and therein lies all the strength I possess. I lay no claim to superhuman powers: I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow-beings wears and am therefore as liable to err as any." Through prayers and fasts, through the practice of love, Gandhi tried to overcome the inconsistencies of his flesh and the discursiveness of his nature and to make himself a fitter instrument for God's work. He felt that all religions at their best prescribe the same discipline for man's fulfilment. The *Vedas* and the *Tipitaka*, the *Bible* and the *Koran* speak to us of the need for self-discipline. The place of prayers and fasts in the lives of the Hindu sages, the Buddha and Jesus is well known.

Gandhi was convinced that all religions aim at the same goal. The inner life, the life of the spirit in God, is the great reality. All else is outside. We make much of the accessories of religion, not of religion itself, not of the temple of God in the human spirit but of the props and buttresses which we have built round the temple for fear that it should fall. These details are moulded by the external conditions and adapted to the traditions of the people.

Hindu religious classics emphasize our duty to see all human beings in our own self, to admit their value and not judge them by external standards. India never attempted to suppress the longings of soul or the patterns of life of communities who have settled there and contributed to the richness of Indian culture. Gandhi recalls us to the age-old tradition of India, the tradition not of mere tolerance but of profound respect for all faiths, and warns us that we should not squander away the spiritual patrimony which generations of our ancestors have built for us with so much assiduity and abnegation. When he was asked to define Hinduism, he said, though he was a Sanatani Hindu he was unable to define Hinduism. As a layman (who was not learned in the science of religion) he could say that Hinduism regarded all religions as worthy of all respect. "Tolerance," says Gandhi, "implies a gratuitous assumption of the inferiority of other faiths to one's own, whereas ahimsa teaches us to entertain the same respect for the religious faiths of others as we accord to our own, thus admitting the imperfections of the latter." Gandhi does not claim exclusive validity for Hinduism and does not grant it to other religions. "It was impossible for me to believe that I could go to heaven or attain salvation only by being a Christian . . . It was more than I could believe that Jesus was the only incarnate Son of God." Truth belongs to God and ideas belong to men and we cannot be certain that our ideas have assimilated the whole truth. Whatever our religious ideas may be, we all seek to climb the hill and our eyes are fixed on the same goal. We may choose different paths and follow different guides. When we reach the top, the roads leading to it matter little if only we keep on ascending. In religion what counts is effort.

The conception of the Indian State as a non-communal one does not mean that it aims only at the secular ends of life, material comfort and success. It means that the State will accord free and equal treatment to all religions, to profess, practise and propagate their faiths so long as their beliefs and practices are not repugnant to the moral sense. The equal treatment of all religions imposes an obligation on the members of different religions to practise mutual tolerance. Intolerance is a proof of incomprehension. In January 1928 Gandhi said to the Federation of International Fellowships: "After long study and experience I have come to these conclusions, that (i) all religions are true, (ii) all religions have some error in them, (iii) all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism. My veneration for others' faiths is the same as for my own faith. Consequently the thought of conversion is impossible. Our prayer for others ought never to be 'God, give them all the light Thou hast given to me,' but 'give them all the light and truth they need for their highest development'. My faith offers me all that is necessary for my inner development, for it teaches one to pray. But I also pray that everyone else may develop to the fullness of his being in his own religion, that the Christian may become a better Christian and the Mohammedan a better Mohammedan. I am convinced that God will one day ask us only what we are and what we do, not the name we give to our being and doing." At the prayer meeting on January 21, 1948, Gandhi said that he had practised Hinduism from early childhood. His nurse had taught him to invoke Rama when he feared evil spirits. Later on he had come in contact with Christians' Muslims and others and after making a fair study of other religions had stuck to Hinduism. He was as firm in his faith today as in his early childhood. He believed God would make him an instrument of saving the religion that he loved, cherished and practised.

Even though Gandhi practised this religion with courage and consistency, he had an unusual sense of humour, a certain light-heartedness, even gaiety, which we do not associate with ardent religious souls. This playfulness was the outcome of an innocence of heart, a spontaneity of spirit. While he redeemed even the most fugitive and trivial moment from commonness, he had all the time a remote, a far-way look. The abuses and perversities of life did not shake his confidence in the essential goodness of things. He assumed, without much discussion, that his way of life was clean, right and natural, while our way in this mechanized industrial civilization was unnatural, unhealthy and wrong.

Gandhi's religion was an intensely practical one. There are religious men who, when they find the troubles and perplexities of the world too much for them, wrap their cloaks around them, withdraw into monasteries or mountain-tops and guard the sacred fires burning in their own hearts. If truth, love and justice are not to be found in this world, we can possess these graces in the inviolable sanctuary of our souls. For Gandhi, sanctity

and service of man were inseparable. "My motive has been purely religious. I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind; and this I could not do unless I took part in politics. The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole; you cannot divide social, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity. My devotion to truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet with all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion meant." Many of us who call ourselves religious maintain the stage-set of religion. We practise mechanically its rites, acquiesce passively in its dogmas. We conform to the forms as such conformity brings us social advantages or political privileges. We invoke the name of God and despise our neighbours. We deceive ourselves with empty phrases and mental clichés. For Gandhi religion was a passionate participation in the life of spirit. It was intensely practical and dynamic. He was keenly sensitive to the pain of the world and longed "to wipe every tear from every eye." He believed in the sanctification of all life. "Politics divorced from religion" was, for him, "a corpse, fit only to be burned."

He looked upon politics as a branch of ethics and religion. It is not a struggle for power and wealth, but a persistent and continuous effort to enable the submerged millions to attain the good life, to raise the quality of human beings, to train them for freedom and fellowship, for spiritual depth and social harmony. A politician who works for these ends cannot help being religious. He cannot ignore the formative share of morality in civilization or take the side of evil against good. Owing to allegiance to the material things of life, Gandhi was able to make changes in them. The prophets of spirit make history just by standing outside history.

It is impertinent for any man to set about reforming the universe. He must start his work for where he is. He must take up the work that lies nearest to hand. When, on his return from South Africa, he found the people of India suffering from mortified pride, want, pain, and degradation, he took up the task of their emancipation as a challenge and an opportunity. It is wrong for the weak to submit to oppression and wrong for the strong to be allowed to oppress. No improvement, he felt, was possible without political freedom. Freedom from subjection should be won not by the usual methods of secret societies, armed rebellion, arson and assassination. The way to freedom is neither by abject entreaty nor by revolutionary violence. Freedom does not descend upon a people as a gift from above, but they have to raise themselves to it by their own effort. The Buddha said: "Ye, who suffer, know ye suffer from yourselves; none else compels." In self-purification lies the path to freedom. Force is no remedy. The use of force in such circumstances is foul play. The force of spirit is invincible. Gandhi said: "The British want us to put the struggle on the plane of machine-

guns. They have weapons and we have not. Our only assurance of beating them is to keep it on the plane where we have the weapons and they have not." If we could combine perfect courage to endure wrong while resisting it with the perfect charity which abstains from hurting or hating the oppressor, our appeal to the human in our oppressor would become irresistible. To a people oppressed for centuries by outsiders, he gave a new self-respect, a new confidence in themselves, a new assurance of strength. He took hold of ordinary men and women, men and women who were an incredible mixture of heroism and conceit, magnificence and meanness, made heroes out of them and organized an unarmed revolt against British Rule. He weaned the country from anarchy and terrorism and saved the political struggle from losing its soul. There were occasions in India's struggle for freedom when he adopted measures which were unintelligible to the mere politician. There are great leaders who know how to bend and flatter in order to draw other men unto them. While they keep their eyes fixed upon the goal, they do not scruple about the means to reach the goal. Not so Gandhi. "If India takes up the doctrine of the sword, she may gain a momentary victory; then India will cease to be the pride of my heart. I believe absolutely that India has a mission for the world; however, India's acceptance of the doctrine of sword will be the hour of my trial. My life is dedicated to the service of India through the religion of non-violence, which I believe to be the root of Hinduism." He ordered the suspension of the movement of non-co-operation when he saw that his people were not able to conform to his high standards. By his withdrawal he exposed himself to the derision of his opponents. "Let the opponent glory in our humiliation and so-called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice than to be guilty of denial of our oath and sin against God. It is a million times better that I should be the laughing-stock of the world than I should act insincerely towards myself...I know that the drastic reversal of practically the whole of the aggressive programme may be politically unsound and unwise but there is no doubt that it is religiously sound." What is morally wrong cannot be politically right. On the evening of August 8, 1942, when what is known as the 'Quit India' resolution was passed by the All India Congress Committee, Gandhi said: "We must look the world in the face with calm and clear eyes, even though the eyes of the world are bloodshot today." When the naval disturbances started in Bombay he scolded those who organized it: "Hatred is in the air and impatient lovers of the country will gladly take advantage of it, if they can, through violence to further the cause of independence. I suggest that it is wrong at any time and everywhere. But it is more wrong and unbecoming in a country whose fighters for freedom have declared to the world that their policy is truth and non-violence." He had great faith that the spirit of violence "is a survival which will kill itself in time. It is so contrary to the spirit of India." "I have striven all my life for the liberating of India. But if I can get it only by

violence, I would not want it." The means by which freedom is attained are as important as the end itself. An India made free through immorality cannot be really free. He conducted the struggle with the established government in India as in South Africa, without any trace of racial feeling, with civilized dignity. The transfer of power on August 15, 1947, marked the end of the struggle. It ended in a settlement readied in a spirit of good temper and friendliness.

Freedom for Gandhi was not a mere political fact. It was a social reality. He struggled not only to free India from foreign rule but free her from social corruption and communal strife. "I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability or the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men."

Political freedom does not represent the fulfilment of a nation's dream. It only provides scope and opportunity for the renewal of a nation's life. A free India must be made a country of discerning people, cherishing the values of true civilization, peace, order, goodwill between man and man, love of truth, quest of beauty and hatred of evil. When we scramble for power over our fellows, for power to make money, for power to make life more ugly than it is, it means that we have lost the grace of life and the dignity of civilization.

Anxious to make the Indian society a truly free one, Gandhi put at the centre of his constructive programme the spinning-wheel, the removal of untouchability and communal harmony. Freedom is a mockery so long as men starve, go naked and pine away in voiceless anguish. The charkha or the spinning-wheel will help to redeem the common man from the evils of poverty and ignorance, disease and squalor. "Political freedom has no meaning for the millions if they do not know how to employ their enforced idleness. Eighty per cent of the Indian population are compulsorily unemployed for half the year; they can only be helped by reviving a trade that has fallen into oblivion and making it a source of new income." Gandhi stressed the use of the spinning-wheel as an occupation supplementary to agriculture.

Gandhi struggled to retain the traditional rural civilization which expressed the living unity of a people harmoniously interacting on a certain soil swayed by a common feeling about life, the earth and the universe. The ambitious spirit of man feels itself strong and free in the villages with their open spaces and green belts rather than in overcrowded cities with their darkness and squalor, foul smell and stagnant air, fevers and rickets. In the village community men feel that they are responsible individuals effectively participating in its life. When these villagers move to towns

they become restless, spiritless and hopeless. The peasant and the weaver are displaced by the mechanic and the businessman, and to compensate for the boredom of life, exciting amusements are devised. No wonder the spirit of man becomes lost in this wilderness of living. If we are to humanize society and bring moral significance to acts and relationships, we should work for a decentralized village economy where machinery could be employed so long as it does not disturb much the fundamental framework of society and the freedom of the human spirit.

Gandhi does not reject machinery as such. He observes: "How can I be against all machinery when I know that even this body is a most delicate piece of machinery? The spinning-wheel is a machine; a little toothpick is a machine. What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today, machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might. The machine should not tend to atrophy the limbs of man... Factories run by power-driven machinery should be nationalized, state-controlled. The supreme consideration is man."

As a religious and social reformer, Gandhi pricked us into a new awareness of the social evils from which we have been suffering. He exhorted us to rid religion of the many accretions with which in its long history it became encumbered, notably untouchability. Hinduism has paid a heavy price for its neglect of social responsibilities. The Constitution of India aims at establishing an equitable social order in which ideals of virtue and freedom will inspire economic and political, social and cultural institutions. Gandhi strove for a free and united India. The hour of his triumph proved to be the hour of his humiliation. The division of the country was a grievous wrong we have suffered. Our leaders, in a mood of frustration, tired of communal 'killings', acquiesced in the partition of India against their better judgement and the advice of Gandhi. However, the price of partition did not yield communal peace, but actually increased communal bitterness. The New Delhi celebrations on August 15 Gandhi would not attend. He excused himself and was engaged in his lonely trek in the villages of Bengal, walking on foot, comforting the poor and the homeless, entreating them to remove from their hearts every trace of suspicion, bitterness and resentment. The large migrations, the thousands of people wandering to and fro weary, uprooted, heavy laden, the mad career of communal violence, worst of all, the spiritual degradation all around, suspicion, anger, doubt, pity, grief, absence of hope filled Gandhi with deep sorrow and led him to devote the rest of his life to the psychological solution of this problem. His fasts at

Calcutta and Delhi had a sobering effect, but the evil was too deep to be cured so easily. On his seventy-eighth birthday, October 2, 1947, Gandhi said "With every breath I pray God to give me strength to quench the flaws or remove me from this earth. I who staked my life to gain India's independence do not wish to be a living witness to its destruction".

When last I met him, early in December 1947,<sup>1</sup> I found him in deep agony and determined to do his utmost to improve the relations among the communities or die in the process. He met his death while engaged in this great work. It is the cross laid on the great-hearted that they exhaust themselves in sorrow and suffering so that those who come after them may live in peace and security.

We are too deeply entangled in our own past misdeeds; we are caught in the web we had ourselves spun according to the laws of our own twisted ethics. Communal differences are yet a wound, not a sepsis. But wounds have a tendency to produce sepsis. If this tendency is to be checked we must adhere to the ideals for which Gandhi lived and died. We must develop self-restraint; we must refrain from anger and malice, intemperance of thought and speech, from violence of every kind. It will be the crown of his life work, if we settle down as good neighbours and adjust our problems in a spirit of peace and goodwill. The way to honour his memory is to accept and adopt his way of approach, the way of reconciliation and sympathetic adjustment of all differences.

When the strife of these days is forgotten, Gandhi will stand out as the great prophet of a moral and spiritual revolution without which this distracted world will not find peace. It is said that non-violence is the dream of the wise, while violence is the history of man. It is true that wars are obvious and dramatic and their results in changing the course of history are evident and striking. But there is a struggle which goes on in the minds of men. Its results are not recorded in the statistics of the killed and the injured. It is the struggle for human decency, for the avoidance of physical strife which restricts human life, for a world without wars. Among the fighters in this great struggle, Gandhi was in the front rank. His message is not a matter for academic debate in intellectual circles. It is the answer to the cry of exasperated mankind which is at the cross-roads—which shall prevail, the law of the jungle or the law of love? All our world organizations will prove ineffective if the truth that love is stronger than hate does not inspire them. The world does not become one simply because we can go round it in less than three days. However far or fast we may travel, our minds do not get nearer to our neighbours. The oneness of the world can only be the oneness of our purposes and aspirations. A united world can only be the material counter-part of a spiritual affinity. Mechanical makeshifts and external structures by themselves cannot achieve the spiritual results. Changes in the social architecture do not alter the minds of peoples. Wars have their origins in false values, in ignorance, in



intolerance. Wrong leadership has brought the world to its present misery. Throughout the world there seems to be a blackout of civilized values. Great nations bomb one another's cities in order to obtain victory. The moral consequences of the use of the atom bomb may prove to be far more disastrous than the bomb itself. The fault is not in our stars but in ourselves. Institutions are of little avail unless we are trained to obey our conscience and develop brotherly love. Unless the leaders of the world discover their highest human dignity in themselves, not the offices they hold, in the depth of their own souls, in the freedom of their conscience, there is no hope for the ordered peace of a world community. Gandhi had the faith that the world is one in its deepest roots and highest aspirations. He knew that the purpose of historical humanity was to develop a world civilization, a world culture, a world community. We can get out of the misery of this world only by exposing the darkness which is strongly entrenched in men's hearts and replacing it by understanding and tolerance. Gandhi's tender and tormented heart heralds the world which the United Nations wish to create. This lonely symbol of a vanishing past is also the prophet of the new world which is struggling to be born. He represents the conscience of the future man.

Gandhi has paid the penalty of all who are ahead of their time, misunderstanding, hatred, reaction, violent death. "The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not". The struggle between light and darkness, between love and hate, between reason and unreason which is at the heart of the cosmic is shown up by this most moving tragedy of our age. We made Socrates drink death; we nailed Jesus to the Cross; we lighted faggots that burnt the medieval martyrs. We have stoned and killed our prophets. Gandhi has not escaped the fate of being misunderstood and hated. He has met his death facing the forces of darkness of ultimate unreason, and through it has increased the powers of light, love and reason. Who knows if Christianity would have developed had Jesus not been crucified? Years ago Romain Rolland declared that he regarded Gandhi as a "Christ who only lacked the Cross." We have now given him the Cross also. Gandhi's death was a classical ending to his life. He died with the name of God on his lips and love in his heart. Even as he received the bullet wounds he greeted his murderer and wished him well. He lived up to what he preached.

Possessed and inspired by the highest ideals of which human nature is capable, preaching and practising fearlessly the truth revealed to him, leading almost alone what seemed to be a forlorn hope against the impregnable strongholds of greed and folly, yet facing tremendous odds with a calm, resolution which yielded nothing to ridicule or danger, Gandhi presented to this unbelieving world all that is noblest in the spirit of man. He illumined human dignity by faith in the eternal significance of man's effort. He belongs to the type that redeems the human race.

If Gandhi was able to rid himself of all rancour and hatred, to develop that flame of love which burnt up all impurities, if he feared no evil even though he walked in the valley of the shadow of death, if he represented to us the eternal voice of hope, it is because he believed in the heritage of India, the power of the inward life of the spirit. When problems material and spiritual crowded upon him, when conflicting emotions shook him, when troubles oppressed him, he retired at will into the retreats of the soul, into the secret corridors of the self to gain strength and refreshment. His life has revived and refreshed our sense of the meaning and value of religion. Such men who are filled with spiritual poise and yet take upon themselves the burden of suffering humanity are born in the world at long intervals. We have killed his body, but the spirit in him which is a light from above will penetrate far into space and time and inspire countless generations for nobler living.

*yad-yad vibhutimat sattvam*

*srimad urjitam eva va*

*tat-tad eva vagaccha tvam*

*mama tejo amsasambhavam*

Whatever being there is endowed with glory and grace and vigour, know that to have sprung from a fragment of My splendour—*Bhagavad Gita*, X, 41.\*

## BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA SUSTAINER OF SPIRITUAL REALITY

*I*t is somewhat surprising that many students of religion assume that the religious seers, the true representatives of religious genius, belong wholly to the past and we today have to live on the memory of the past. If religion is a living truth, if it has any vitality, it must be capable of producing men who from time to time bear witness to the truth and confirm and correct from their own experience the religious tradition. When the springs of experience dry up, our love for religion is a mere affectation, our faith a belief and our behaviour a habit with no reality behind it. In the Indian religious tradition, religion has meant not an imaginative or intellectual apprehension of Reality but its embodiment in regenerated living. Religion should energize our consciousness, transform our character and make us new men. The truly religious are those who have solid hold of the unseen Reality in which we ordinary men merely believe. They are not freaks proclaiming the reality of spirit which is esoteric and

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\*From *Facets of Gandhi* edited by B.K. Ahluwalia

intense. They tell us that they have a direct knowledge of the Real of which we have indirect or inferential knowledge. For them God is an Abiding Fact, a Living Presence, and in the consciousness of this fact their whole existence is transformed. These artists of the inner life are of different types. Some are full of poetry and music; others are vigorous men of action; still others are solitary souls. Despite these differences they walk the same road, speak the same language of the soul and belong to the same family.

The Indian tradition has been kept alive by seers who were born in every age and incarnated the great ideal. We have such god-engrossed souls even today. It is our good fortune that we have with us today a living embodiment of God-centred life, a perfect image of the life divine in their mirror of human existence. Sri Ramana Maharshi is not a scholar; he has no erudition, but he has wisdom that comes from direct experience of Reality, the wisdom we acquire through the discipline, not of intellect but of one's nature, through chastity, power and obedience. The possession of this wisdom yields the fruits of spirit, love and purity, courage and humility, courtesy and holiness.

Sri Ramana was born on the 30th December, 1879, with a latent disposition to religion. He was no good at studies because his heart was elsewhere. His reading of *Periyapuranam* with its account of the selfless devotion of *bhaktas* made a deep impression on his devout nature. The change which took him away from worldly pursuits is thus described in his own words: "It was six weeks before I left Madura for good that the great change in my life took place; it was so sudden. One day I sat up alone on the first floor of my uncle's house. I was in my usual good health. But a sudden and unmistakable fear of death seized me. I felt I was going to die, and at once set about thinking what I should do. I did not care to consult anyone, be he a doctor, elder or friend. I felt I had to solve the problem myself then and there. The shock of the fear of death made me at once introspective or 'introverted'. I said to myself mentally, i.e., without uttering the words 'Now death is come, what does it mean? Who is it that is dying? This body dies.' I at once dramatized the situation. I extended my limbs and held them rigid, as though rigormortis (death-stiffening) had set in. I imitated a corpse to lend an air of reality to my further investigation. I held my breath and kept my mouth closed, pressing the lips tightly together, so that no sound could escape. 'Well then,' I said to myself, 'this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the crematory and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of my body am I dead? Is the body 'I'? This body is silent and inert. But I am still aware of the full force of my personality and even of the sound of 'I' within myself, as apart from the body. So 'I' am a Spirit transcending the body. The material body dies, but the Spirit transcending it cannot be touched by death. I am, therefore, the deathless Spirit.' All this was not a

feat of intellectual gymnastics, but came as a flash before me vividly as living truth, something which I perceived immediately, without argument almost. 'I' was something very real, the only real thing in that state, and all the conscious activity that was connected with my body was centred on that. The 'I' or myself was holding the focus of attention with a powerful fascination. Fear of death vanished at once and for ever. The absorption in the Self has continued from that moment right up to now." Growing absorption in spiritual matters made Sri Ramana indifferent to his studies. When rebuked, he left his home on Saturday, the 29th of August, 1896, leaving a note behind him: "I have in search of my Father, according to his command, started from this place. On a virtuous enterprise indeed has this embarked. Therefore, for this act none need grieve nor to trace this out need money be spent." Thus under a sense of Divine Command he left Madura and after some trouble, reached Tiruvannamalai on the 1st of September. When he visited the temple he fell into a trance. In such conditions a sense of oneness with the Ultimate Reality is produced. Sri Ramana renounced the world and became an *Avadhuta* which is a compound word made of four letters *A-va-dhu-ta*. The first stands for *Aksaratva* or imperishability; the second for *Varenyatva* or the summit of perfection; the third for the destruction of the bonds which implicate us in the temporal process and the last for the realization of the truths conveyed by the great passage 'That art thou.' To attain such a condition of harmonizing consciousness has been the aim of religious men. If we lose ourselves in the hopes and desires, in the fears and cravings, which wax and wane with the accidents of the outer world, if we yield to the chance allurements of time and space, we will lose our soul. Doubt which comes to us from outside is insignificant as compared with the doubt that corrodes from within. The true evil is not death of the body, but the failure of one's nature, the death of faith in the Ultimate Reality.

In his thought, Sri Ramana adopts the metaphysical position of Advaita Vedanta. He speaks to us of the Divine which is the pure subject from which all objectivity is excluded. The 'I' is different from the 'me'. The Self is not the body which perishes, not the senses which suffer the same fate as the body, not life, mind or intellect. It is the pure Spectator, the *Saksin*, which is the same in all. We get to realize it not by metaphysical theorizing but by spiritual discipline. Reality impinges on the unreality of life and to discover reality, absolute concentration and consecration are essential. We have to still our desires, steady our impulses, tread the ethical path. We cannot see so long as our vision is engrossed in outer forms but those who turn their gaze inwards behold it. No one can see properly so long as he remains divided and disintegrated in his consciousness. We must become inwardly whole and free. We cannot acquire this wholeness or integrity if we do not root out our selfish impulses. We cannot know truly or act rightly so long as we are too afraid, too

indolent or too self-centred. To see the Real and not merely the things of the world, the eye must be inverted. God is within as. Not comfort but control is happiness. 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself,' says Jesus. Dedication to God means denial of the ego. We must empty the self in the abyss of God. This process is helped by the practice of unselfish service (*niskama karma*) devotion (*bhakti*), mind-control (*yoga*), and inquiry (*vicara*). Inquiry into self, religious worship, ethical service are means to this realization. The end of all worship *puja*, *japa*, *dhyana*, is communion with God. With increasing intensity in our devotion the distance between the human and the Divine diminishes. Indian thought believes in four stages of God-realization—*salokya*, where God and the worshipper dwell in the same world, *samnya*, where the devotee is near the Divine, *sarupya*, where the devotee assimilates more and more the forms and attributes of the Divine, and *sayujya*, where the devotee is united to the Divine.

When one discovers the Divine within oneself, one must discover it also in the outer world of men and things. While the heights within are revealed to those who strenuously exclude all that lies without, the process of seeing all in the fullness of the Divine is more arduous. God is both eternal silence and perpetual activity, the unmoved witness and the ground of all that is, the metaphysical Absolute and the personal Lord. The Divine reveals itself anew in all life and existence. Nothing on earth is excluded from the Divine Consciousness. The Divine is the life which gives birth to us all is farther than our farthest thought. Sri Ramana dwells not only in a world of pure subjectivity but has also a sense of the Infinite that is in all. As he has eliminated his selfish ego he becomes the Voice of the whole, the conscience of all that is. As he has no selfish desires and no sense of agency, he enters into the world- movement and carries out the functions expected of him by that Universal Spirit. Honour and dishonour, praise and blame, do not move him. Actions are not subject to the necessity of nature but are centred in the freedom of the Divine.

It is a false assumption to hold that the spiritually strong have no patience with human weakness. They are not insensitive to human sorrow. The *rsis* are revealers of Reality, which is all-bliss. They do not keep their discoveries to themselves. They have a social significance. By getting into their company, we, ordinary people, realize the actuality of the world of spirit and catch something of their fire. The great of spirit are ministering angels who assist, protect and help those who are in need. Association with holy people produces detachment from fruits of action. Such detachment leads to desirelessness; from desirelessness arises stability of mind; Liberation in life is then achieved. The *Upanisad* asks the aspirant for spiritual life to approach fuel in hand, a teacher versed in scriptures, steady in his realization of the Supreme. The teacher allows the path. His very presence radiates peace and joy. He refashions the souls of those

who look to him for help. With keen psychological insight he understands the needs of those who approach him and satisfies them. Like all saints, he has the foundation in God: his surface is intertwined with everything that exists. He loves all beings as he loves himself and cannot rest until everyone mirrors the Divine in his life.

The saints are the sustainers of society. Philo remarks: "Households, cities, countries and nations have enjoyed great happiness, when a single individual has taken heed of the good and beautiful. Such men not only liberate themselves, they fill those they meet with a free mind." The true sages possess the inner joy and peace which are independent of outer circumstances. Their happiness is not dependent on outer things. They have passed beyond the forms of social life. Their renunciation is spontaneous and does not involve any idea of sacrifice. They work for the fulfilment of the Divine in the world, for the good of all beings, for the fulfilment of the Purpose. They are one in consciousness and action with the Divine.

To suggest that the spiritual souls are expected to abstain from action in the world is incorrect. The opportunities which the world offers are to be used for self-development. Life is a game where we should act our parts. We are all cast for different roles and our business is to play them in the right spirit. We may lose the game but we should not mind it. It is the play that matters and not the score we make.

If the world is to be saved, it can only be by the intrusion of another world into it, a world of higher truth and greater reality than that which is now submerged by the overwhelming discords and sufferings of the present time. Our failure to develop contact with this world of Reality is the cause of our malady. Men like Sri Ramana recall us to that larger dimension of Reality to which we really belong, though we are generally unaware of it\*



**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU**

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## INDIA TODAY AND TOMORROW

*T*o endeavour to understand and describe the India of today would be the task of a brave man, to say anything about tomorrow's India would verge on rashness. Indeed, at no time in the world's history has it been more difficult to forecast the future of any country or of the world. Events move at an incredible pace, and change follows change. The superficial aspect of politics covers innumerable currents below the surface, sometimes erupting and upsetting the shape of things.

India today is the outcome not only of the immediate past, but also of the thousands of years of the long story of our country. Layer upon layer of thought, experience and action have conditioned us and made us what we are today. Those of my generation in India were especially moulded and conditioned by a series of events which are not likely to occur again. Not only did we come in contact with a great man and a mighty leader who shook us up completely, upset our lives and drew us out of the normal routine of living, but we also witnessed and participated in events of historic importance. We experienced repeatedly moments of high tension and emotional exaltation, and also the reaction to this in occasional frustration, almost akin to despair. Yet, this is not wholly correct for we escaped that feeling of mental and physical collapse which usually follows a nervous tension of high degree. There was always something to hold on to, a leader who was like a rock and a lighthouse, and a movement which thrilled us and called out the best in us. Those moments were often not pleasurable and were sometimes even painful, but there was always a sense of satisfaction and a feeling that we were engaged in great deeds and were marching in step with history. Thought and action went together, producing the sensation of a full life. What saved us, more than anything else, was a belief that we were functioning, even in political affairs, on an ethical plane and with high ideals. Hatred did not consume us as it does in conflicts and, more especially, in nationalist struggles.

There was Gandhiji always before us and in our minds. But there were others too, giants among men, and there was the comradeship of

innumerable men and women whose stature had risen because they were allied to great causes and to a great leader. Among these giants of old, young in years, but always looked upon as a veteran and old in wisdom, was Maulana Azad. He occupied a special place in our movement and he represented to us, more than any one else, that synthesis of cultures for which India had always striven. He helped us to get out of the ruts of a narrow nationalism and enlarged our vision. It was strange that so many people, who differed greatly among themselves, should find a powerful common bond and should work together for a whole generation.

What is India? That is a question which has come back again and again to my mind, and in my own amateurish way I sought a reply to it in her past and in the present. The early beginnings of our history filled me with wonder. It was the past of a virile and vigorous race with a questing spirit, an urge for free inquiry and, even in its earliest known period, giving evidence of a mature and tolerant civilization. Accepting life and its joys and burdens, it was ever searching for the ultimate and the universal. It built up a magnificent language, Sanskrit, and through this language and its art and architecture, it sent its vibrant message to far countries. It produced the *Upanishads*, the *Gita* and the Buddha.

Hardly any language in the world has played that vital part in the history of a race which Sanskrit has. It was not only the vehicle of the highest thought and some of the finest literature, but it became the uniting bond for India, even though there were political divisions. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* were woven into the texture of millions of lives in every generation for thousands of years. I have often wondered that if our race forgot the Buddha, the *Upanishads* and the great epics, what then will it be like? It would be uprooted and would lose the basic characteristics which have clung to it and given it distinction throughout these long ages. India would cease to be India.

Gradually deterioration set in, thought lost its freshness and became stale, the vitality and exuberance of youth gave place to crabbed age. Instead of the spirit of adventure there came lifeless routines, and the broad and exciting vision of the world was cabined and confined and lost in caste divisions, narrow social customs and ceremonials. Even so, India was vital enough to absorb the streams of people that flowed into her mighty ocean of humanity, and she never quite forgot the thoughts that had stirred her in the days of her youthful vigour.

Subsequently, India was powerfully influenced by the coming of Islam and Muslim invasions. Western colonial powers followed, bringing a new type of domination, a new colonialism and, at the same time, the impact of fresh ideas and of the industrial civilization that was growing up in Europe. This period culminated, after a long struggle, in independence and now

we face the future with all this burden of the past upon us and the confused dreams and stirrings of the future that we seek to build. We have all these ages represented in us and in our country today. Organized power and energy are the symbols of the modern age. We have the growth of nuclear science in India and atomic energy, and we also have the cow-dung age. Thus every century is represented in this country and, in addition, there is enormous variety. Behind that variety there is the unity which has kept our people together through the ages in spite of misfortune and disaster. We are plunging into the world of science and technology and trying to organize our knowledge in such a way that it commands more of the forces of Nature, and we are held back not only by our poverty and under-development, but also by some inherited ideas and customs. There is no future for us without science and technology. At the same time that future will be shallow and empty and without any real meaning if we ignore or forget our past.

So, in the tumult and confusion of our time, we stand facing both ways, forward to the future and backward to the past, being pulled in both directions. How can we resolve this conflict and evolve a structure for living which fulfils our material needs and, at the same time, sustains our mind and spirit? What new ideals or old ideals, varied and adapted to the new world, can we place before our people, and how can we galvanize them into wakefulness and action?

We have our particular problems in India. But we also share the major problems of a world which, for all its tremendous advance, appears to be losing faith in itself. For the present, in India, we are rightly absorbed in economic progress, Five Year Plans, and a tremendous effort to raise our people's living standards. All this is essential and a pre-requisite for any other type of advance. But a doubt creeps into our minds. Is this by itself enough or is something else to be added on to it? The Welfare State is a worthwhile ideal, but it may well be rather drab, and the examples of States which have achieved that objective bring out new problems and difficulties, which are not solved by material advance alone or by a mechanical civilization. Religion has played an important part in supplying some essential needs of human nature. But that type of religion has weakened its hold and is unable to meet the onslaught of science and rationalism. Whether religion is necessary or not, a certain faith in a worthwhile ideal is essential to give substance to our lives and to hold us together. We have to have a sense of purpose beyond the material and physical demands of our daily lives.

Socialism and Communism attempt to give this sense of purpose, but they have tended to develop dogmas of their own. Communists have become the metaphysicians of the present age.

Every society tries to find an equilibrium. Sometimes this is through conflict, sometimes by deliberate or unconscious attempt to achieve harmony. A primitive society which does not change much, lives in a rut, and thus has an equilibrium at a low level. A dynamic society produces tensions in the individual as well as in the community. If this is true, then the present tensions in the world indicate a tremendous dynamism, a striving for a new equilibrium and a new dimension in human existence. That should hearten us if there was not an ever present fear that the weapons of the nuclear age might annihilate mankind.

We must look to the future and work for it purposively and with faith and vigour, at the same time we must keep our past inheritance and derive sustenance from it. Change is essential, but continuity is also necessary. The future has to be built on the foundations laid in the past and the present. To deny the past and break with it completely is to uproot ourselves and, sapless, dry up. It was the virtue of Gandhiji to keep his feet firmly planted in the rich traditions of our race and our soil and, at the same time, to function on the revolutionary plane. Many criticized him for what they called his acceptance of out-of-date economic theories or for his supporting some kind of traditionalism or even encouraging reactionary forces, and yet, any one who examines the broad sweep of his activities is overwhelmed by their revolutionary consequences. Whether we look at them in the political or the social field, we find some difficulty in recognizing this because we have been brought up in the Western traditions of conflict. He knew that a true revolution comes from the people and not at the top, and that revolution must be essentially social. Many eminent social reformers came before him and succeeded in bringing about some minor changes or in building up a new sect, but Gandhiji, talking in terms of Ram Rajya, brought revolution to millions of homes without people realizing fully what was happening. He seldom condemned caste as a whole (though in his later days he did so to some extent), but by his insistence on the uplift of the Depressed Classes and the Untouchables, he undermined the entire caste system, and he did so deliberately, knowing the consequences.

By his technique of political action, he vitalized hundreds of millions of people, drove out fear from them, and produced in them self-respect and self-reliance. By his stress on the under-privileged and poverty-stricken, he forced all of us to think in terms of social justice. He did all this calmly and dispassionately avoiding to a large extent, a sense of conflict. Above all, he laid stress on truth and peaceful means. Indeed, truth became a condition of living for him, and his dynamic action was allied always to truth. In doing so, he revived memories in our people of the basic principles which had enriched our race in the past. Thus he built on old foundations, and at the same time, oriented the structure towards the future. The fact that some of his economic or other approaches did not fit in with modern

ideas or had only some temporary significance did not trouble him. He was always prepared to adapt himself to changing conditions, provided the base was sound.

It has always seemed to me remarkable how he could link the past with the present and even the future. And because he could do so, he could make his people advance step by step without a break, and also avoid conflict to a considerable extent. The most vital lesson that he taught us or made us remember afresh, was the importance of means. Ends were never enough by themselves for the ends were shaped by the means that led to them. If there is any basic truth in this principle and in his method of working, then we also have to build on the foundations he laid down. That does not mean a slavish following of everything that he said or did, which might have been suitable at one stage of our existence and is no longer appropriate today. We have also to adapt ourselves to changing circumstances, but the basic principles must continue to guide us.

When Islam came to India in the form of political conquest, it brought conflict. It had a two-fold effect. On the one hand, it encouraged the tendency of Hindu society to shrink still further within its shell; on the other, it brought a breath of fresh air and fresh ideas, and thus had a certain rejuvenating influence. Hindu society had become a closed system unlike Buddhism, another great product of Indian thought. The Muslims who came from outside, brought their own closed system with them. Thus, two closed systems met; neither being strong enough to uproot or subdue the other. Political triumph did not lead to intellectual, moral or religious conquest. The old Indian tradition and faith were still strong and firm enough to resist the new influence. The Muslims came with a vigorous message of their own and could not easily be absorbed, as previous comers had been absorbed. Nor could they change the essential character of the Indian people. Hence, the great problem that faced India during the medieval period was how these two closed systems, each with its strong roots, could develop a healthy relationship. Wise rulers like Akbar and others realized that the only hope for the future lay in some kind of harmony being established.

The philosophy and the world outlook of the old Hindus was amazingly tolerant; and yet they had divided themselves up into numerous separate caste groups and hierarchies. The Muslims had to face a new problem, how to live with others as equals. In other countries where they had gone, their success was so great that this problem did not really arise. They came into conflict with Christendom and through hundreds of years the problem was never solved. In India, slowly a synthesis was developed. But before this could be completed, other influences came into play. Western nations developing industrially and becoming strong had the feeling of their essential superiority over others and lived apart, looking down upon those

they governed. There was a far greater gulf between them and the Indians than there ever had been between Hindus and Muslims.

For the first time, India was subjected to colonial rule and governance from a distant and far off country. Previously, the invaders and conquerors who had come to India, had made India their home and did not look elsewhere; essentially they became Indians. Now, a new type of invasion took place which could find no roots in India. There was an impenetrable barrier between them and the people of the country, whether Hindus, Muslims or others.

Even so, the new liberal thought of the West and industrial processes began to affect the mind and life of India. A new nationalism developed, which was inevitably against colonialism and sought independence, and yet which was being progressively affected by the new industrial civilization as well as the language, literature and ways of the West. This influence was largely confined to a top layer of the people, the great mass sinking into greater poverty. Ram Mohan Roy came, seeking some kind of a synthesis between old India and modern trends. Vivekananda brought back something of the vigour of old Indian thought and dressed it in a modern garb. Political and cultural movements grew up and culminated in Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore.

In Europe there had been fierce conflict between science and traditional religion, and the cosmology of Christianity did not fit in at all with scientific theories. Science did not produce that sense of conflict in India, and Indian philosophy could easily accept it without doing any vital injury to its basic conceptions. But the social structure of India became more and more incompatible with modern trends.

In India, as elsewhere, two forces developed—the growth of nationalism and the urge for social justice. Socialism and Marxism became the symbols of this urge for social justice and apart from their scientific content, had a tremendous emotional appeal for the masses. Marx was primarily moved by the ghastly conditions that prevailed in the early days of industrialization in western Europe. At that time there was no truly democratic structure of the State, and changes could hardly be made constitutionally. Hence, revolutionary violence offered the only way to change. Marxism, therefore, inevitably thought in terms of a violent revolution. This was also in the tradition of Europe. Since then, however, political democracy has spread bringing with it possibility of peaceful change. There has also been a tremendous scientific and technological advance which has brought material prosperity within the reach of all. Capitalism itself today has undergone a great deal of change, though it maintains its basic features and tends towards monopolies and aggregations of economic power. The democratic structure of the State, organized labour and, above all, the urge for social justice as well as scientific and technological progress, have

brought about this transformation. We see today capitalist countries which have achieved a very high material standard of living for all their people.

We see also a tremendous advance in material well-being and scientific and technological progress in the Soviet Union, achieved in relatively short period of time. To say that this has been brought about chiefly by violence is not correct. There has been enough violence in other systems also. But, true, I think, that because of circumstances, there has been a good deal of violence and purges associated with the development of the Soviet Union. The greatest condemnation of this violence has come from the great leaders of the Soviet Union themselves.

International affairs are dominated today by the conflict between the Western Powers and the Communist Powers, more particularly, by the rivalry between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. And yet, in spite of the manifest differences, there is an amazing similarity between these two Super-Powers. They have both developed a high degree of industrial and mechanical civilization; they believe in the ever growing power of the machine and its capacity to solve human problems. Both their peoples are friendly and hospitable and attached to peace. The real difference today is between the developed countries and those that are still under-developed. To these latter has come the realization that only through scientific and industrial growth, can they achieve any kind of progress or get rid of the tremendous material ills that they suffer from. To that end they strive, with more or less success, for the task is a hard one. In Europe, an economic revolution preceded a real political revolution, and so when the latter came, certain resources had been built up by economic changes. In Asia, political revolution came first, followed immediately by demands for social betterment, which could not easily be fulfilled because of economic backwardness and lack of resources. The problems of under-developed countries were different from those that had already been industrialized and had built up an apparatus for large scale production. It is obvious that these under-developed countries could not go through the long processes which had industrialized Europe and America. There was constant social pressure which might well upset the political fabric unless the people were given something to satisfy their longings. Then there was also the pressure of rapidly growing populations which consumed whatever greater production was made, leaving little room for saving or investment for further advance. The basic problem thus became one of how in an under-developed and poverty-stricken country, surpluses could be created for investment and greater production. Every such attempt meant a greater burden on the masses. And yet, those very masses claimed relief from their existing burdens.

Coercive methods could be employed. But, in the final analysis, even coercion cannot go far in the case of masses of people unless it is allied to



hope for the future. Thus, essential incentives for greater effort had in any event to be provided, and some realizable objective had to be placed before the people which gave them this hope for the future. That future could not be too distant. In a democratic society, everything depends on its capacity to rouse the people to greater effort by offering such hope and incentives, as well as a progressive amelioration of their lot.

Among the under-developed countries, India is perhaps more advanced than most others. During the last few years, there has been definite progress made in building up a base for industrialization, in improving agriculture, and advancing education and health. But, above all, she has had the advantage of the ideals and objectives and disciplines built up by the National Movement which brought independence.

Nationalism is still the strongest force in Asia. The growth of this nationalism in Asia is obvious. But, even in Europe, it is becoming more and more apparent. There was the terrible nationalism associated with Fascism and Nazism. While that threat was countered, an aggressive nationalism, though of a milder type, still influences the policies of many countries. In many countries of Europe, this is evident in greater or lesser degree. This trend is coexistent with an opposite one towards supra-national unity in Europe as represented by attempts to develop a common market and many common institutions.

Even in Communist countries, nationalism is in evidence. The Soviet Union, greatly influenced by Marxist ideas and their subsequent variations, has also a strong nationalist element. In the other countries of Eastern Europe, the force of nationalism is obvious. Even in China, Communism bases itself on nationalism. It might be said that the strength of Communism, wherever it is in practice, is partly due to its association with the national spirit. Where the two are dissociated, Communism is relatively weak, except in so far as it embodies the discontent that exists in under-developed and poverty-stricken countries.

The nationalist urge, in countries which are still under foreign domination, necessarily takes the form of a struggle for independence. In strong and independent countries, it tends to some extent towards expansionism, though it is somewhat checked by opposing tendencies.

Thus we see today a clash between impulses towards a larger integration, such as in Europe and elsewhere, and the centrifugal forces representing traditional nationalism. The great development of science and technology and, more particularly, communications, presses more and more towards larger integrations. And it may be presumed that in this, as in other matters, science, representing the basic facts of modern life, will win in the end. The real danger comes from nationalist conflicts which may lead to war.

The possibility of such a conflict is increased by the cold war between the major ideologies in the world today. And yet, behind the supposed conflict of ideologies like the political rivalry of great nations, each afraid of the other. There are basic differences in outlook and economic doctrine as well as in the domain of the liberty and the State between the Communist countries and those that are not Communist. These differences have already lessened somewhat and will probably continue to lessen, and the gap between the two, though it appears to be broad and deep, will diminish. It is not so much ideology which is changing human life, but the growth of science and technology which are constantly moulding social and economic structures. Functions influence form. This is so in architecture. It is equally so ultimately in social structures, the form of that structure following its function. Science and technology are constantly changing functions, and so the social structure has necessarily to adapt its form to these new functions.

Thus, the essential and most revolutionary factor in modern life is not a particular ideology, but technological advance. Where technological change is slow, the old forms continue. An under-developed and backward community has backward forms and social structure which do not allow it to fit in with the modern age of science. But the facts of life cannot be denied and change must come bringing with it other consequences in its train. That change has sometimes been rather sudden and upsetting, but even otherwise those changes come, though more slowly.

In a democratic society, that is, where there is adult suffrage and some kind of parliamentary government, the means are provided for the change of function and even form to some extent. But old established forms and vested interests resist change till it is forced down upon them by circumstances. The "establishment" is always resistant to any change whether it is religious, economic or social.

Living is a continual adjustment to changing conditions. Every political, economic and social form has a certain discipline. There is the discipline of religion, and that of social usage, and these include a certain moral or spiritual discipline. When functions and forms change, the order disciplines are weakened and are gradually replaced by new disciplines. The rapidity of technological change in the last half century has made the necessity of social change greater than ever, and there is a continual maladjustment. In the ancient days, life was simpler and more in contact with Nature, and there was time for reflection and meditation. Now, life becomes more and more complex, and there is less and less of quiet thinking. Even where there is leisure, one does not know what to do with it.

This problem of the use of leisure is gradually becoming a major one in the developed countries although it does not affect India at present and

will not affect it in the foreseeable future. A life divorced from Nature and more and more dependent upon mechanical devices, begins to lose its savour and even the sense of function leaves it. Moral and spiritual disciplines break up, and some kind of disillusion follows with a feeling that something is wrong with our civilization. Some people talk of going back to Nature and to the simpler life of the ancient days. But, whatever virtue there was in this, there can obviously be no going back, for the world has changed. An individual may take to *sanyasa* with its renunciation of life, but society as a whole cannot do so. It has to base itself on an acceptance of life with all its problems and difficulties and try to make the most of it. If it did not do so, it would perish.

The advance of science and technology makes it definitely possible to solve most of the economic problems of the world and, in particular, to provide the primary necessities of life to everyone all over the world. It holds the promise of higher standards and avenues of cultural development opening out. Today the Welfare State and even a classless society are not the ideals of socialism only, but are accepted by capitalist countries also, even though the approaches are different. Thus, the basic ideals come nearer to each other and there is a possibility of approaching those objectives even though the methods might be different. These methods will not only be based on some logical theories, but will help to depend upon the background and cultural development of a country or a community—geographical, historical, religious, economic and social. Any real change cannot easily be imposed. It has to grow. A country, especially one with an old civilization, has deep roots in the past, which cannot be pulled out without great harm even though many weeds in the form of harmful or out-of-date customs and institutions can and should be pulled out. Even as Nature establishes some kind of an equilibrium which cannot be disturbed suddenly without untoward results appearing, so also in a community or a country, it is not easy or desirable to upset old ways of living too suddenly. The attempt to solve a problem in this way might well lead to graver and more difficult problems.

This applies to the external world we live in, much more so does it apply to the inner life of human beings. In dealing with tribal and somewhat primitive societies, it is well known that an attempt at too rapid a change has led to disastrous consequences. The more developed societies may not suffer so much from rapid change, but in the jet age and the coming age of space travel, no one knows what biological and other changes may take place.

If that is so externally, then surely even greater changes would take place in the mind, emotions and spirit of man. Man today, as never before in human history, has to live with change as a permanent partner in his activities and his institutions. Indeed he cannot keep pace with this change

and though he uses the products of science and technology, he seldom understands them. Education is supposed to develop an integrated human being and to prepare young people to perform useful functions for society and to take part in collective life. But when that society is changing from day to day, it is difficult to know how to prepare and what to aim at. There is a lack of harmony between highly technical civilization and the older forms of social life and the philosophy underlying them. The relationship to Nature changes, and even the relationship to one's own personality undergoes a change. The value of human personality diminishes in a mechanical society. The individual loses himself in the mass and tends to become merely an instrument in a complex set-up which is constantly aiming at social and economic improvements of the group as a whole.

Many of us attach great value to the development and the freedom of the individual. Ideological backgrounds help or hinder in this process. But perhaps the most potent factor in diminishing the value of individual personality is mechanization and automation.

We see the effects of these rapid technological changes, more especially in young men and women today. Parents and educators and social workers are troubled because of the divergence between young people and adults. The patterns of behaviour which were held by the adults, are no longer accepted, and there is a rejection of the old moral standards. In extreme cases, there is a tendency to criminality, alcoholism, destructiveness, eroticism in addition to a cynical and negative attitude towards life and works. In a world of constant change and without any assurance or certainty, the hedonistic principles of life have a strong appeal. The continuity of national culture is threatened and a tendency towards social disintegration becomes evident.

This is perhaps an extreme view and not quite a just estimate of what is happening today. But there can be no doubt that these tendencies are present, more so in the developed and advanced societies than in India or other under-developed countries. But it is important to note them because similar forces are likely to affect our life too. Perhaps, all this is a necessary consequence of an age of rapid transition, and a new base of civilization, fitting in with technology, will be gradually created and with it will develop new ideologies, new forms of collective life and, indeed, a broader philosophy of life.

I do not know if this is considered too pessimistic a view of what is happening. My own reaction to events in India or the world is not pessimistic and some faith, which I cannot analyze or explain, fills me with hope for the future. Perhaps this is due to the good fortune that has attended me in a large measure. The greatest good fortune has been the tremendous affection of the Indian people, but even when I have gone abroad, I have met with friendship and heart-warming welcomes from the people

everywhere. Thus I have developed a great affection for and faith in our own people in India and also respect and affection for the peoples of other lands. I have realized that what one gives, one receives. If one gives affection, it comes back in abundant measure; if it is hatred, then we get that in return. I have seen and felt that people everywhere yearn for peace and goodwill and co-operation. If this is so, as I believe it is, then it should be possible for us to turn the tide of events from conflict to co-operation, from thoughts of war to the works of peace.

Fear, I think, is probably the greatest evil, because out of fear rise conflict and violence. Violence is a reaction to fear, so also is untruth. In our ancient writings, it is said that the greatest gift that can be given is that of fearlessness—*Abhayadan*. A person who is free from fear can view things in a right perspective and can preserve a certain integrity in mind and actions. Today we see fear enveloping the world and even the greatest and most powerful nations are affected by it. Wealth and power, instead of lessening that element of fear actually increase it. None of us, except saints and supermen, can become absolutely fearless. But we can keep this ideal before us and try to achieve it. Gandhiji's greatest contribution to India was to lessen this sense of fear among our people.

Fearlessness leads to compassion and tolerance. When we think of the Buddha, it is his compassion that overwhelms us ; when we think of Asoka, it is his amazing toleration that pulls us up from our narrow creeds.

The world is full of conflicts—national, international and of race, religion, creed and class. It is absurd to deny or ignore these conflicts, but we can approach them not by way of conflict, but by way of peace and thus seek to resolve them.

Internationally, the major question today is that of world peace. This involves an attempt to solve the great problems and disputes which afflict us. How a solution may come, it is not for me to say. But I think we should be clear in our minds as to the means we adopt and the way we tread to find the solution. It is often said that the choice today is between war, involving almost total annihilation, and some peaceful solution of these problems. If these are the alternative, then the choice is clear. Having made that choice, it should follow that everything that adds to the tensions of the world has to be avoided. We must come to the firm conclusion that war today must be ruled out, for it does not even promise victory or the fruits of victory. To live on the verge of war and to practise brinkmanship is therefore, the absence of wisdom. Even though we may differ from each other, we must refrain from angry criticisms and condemnations; we must realize that it is absurd for any one group to call half the world evil or dominated by evil. It is easy to criticize the capitalist world or the communist world, but both have great virtues if they have also many failings, and

both tend to move in the same direction in spite of their inner conflicts, and both are governed by the advance of science and technology. The only course open is for us to accept the world as it is and develop toleration for each other. The old conflicts of mutually exclusive religions gradually ended after bloody wars and a new toleration grew up. There is no reason why toleration should also not grow up between rival economic and social theories. Ultimately the facts of life will decide and influence both. It should be open to each country to develop in its own way, learning from others, and not being imposed on by them. In this way, each ideology will influence the other and be influenced by it.

Nationalism is a healthy and desirable state in a people; when suppressed, it reacts strongly, but when allied to too much power, it may become aggressive and chauvinistic. Modern nationalism has been a reaction against foreign imperialism and racialism.

Racialism still exists in varying degrees in many countries, but it is generally condemned. Only in the Union of South Africa is it the accepted philosophy of the State. It is clear that this is a terrible source of conflict and as it involves domination in its worst form, it must produce bitterness and strong reactions. To leave this conflict to be decided by methods of violence is a counsel of despair, apart from the disastrous consequences which this would bring in its train. It may be that world opinion against racialism will become so strong that no country or group will be able to advocate it or practise it.

Imperialism or colonialism, whatever form it may take, is also completely out of place today in the world and the source of conflict. It exists still in many places and its philosophies influence many minds. But it is a discredited creed and is everywhere on the defensive. A world policy must therefore be to bring about the end of racialism and imperialism and leave countries to work out their own destinies. This might lead to disorder and chaos in some countries, but that will be limited and not affect larger areas and will probably right itself after a while. What is wrong and leads to dangerous consequences today is the attempt of one country to impose its will on another. Military alliances and the cold war, whatever their justification in the past, lead today to insecurity and fear of war. They prevent the normal development of countries and vitiate the atmosphere of the world. So long as there is a cold war, there will be no toleration. Instead of undeveloped countries being helped to grow and raise their standards, military considerations come into play and often political regimes which are reactionary and disliked by the people are bolstered up, thus adding further to insecurity.

It is unrealistic to suggest that the troubles, conflicts and passions of the world can be removed by some magic wand or pious phrases. But it is

totally realistic to recommend a course of action which tends to lessen tensions and ultimately does away with the probability of conflict. Essentially this course of action is a new mental approach followed by political and economic policies in line with it. The Panchsheel, or the Five Principles, about which so much has been said, offer that approach but this approach can only be real if there is a change of mind and spirit and not merely the bandying of words which have lost meaning. Peace is not a physical abstention from war, but an attempt to create a climate of peace all over the world.

In India we have attempted to follow this policy in international affairs though I cannot say that we have always been successful in doing so. Foreign policies depend ultimately on international conditions and developments. Internal progress for us, therefore becomes essential if we are to play any effective part in world affairs. It is even more essential, of course, for our own well-being.

After the First Five Year Plan and two years of the Second Plan, we have made definite progress in many directions, some obvious, others not so apparent. The pace of progress has not been as rapid in some directions as we would have liked it to be, but let us remember that it has been solid and substantial progress. Both in agriculture and industry, that progress is evident and it is ultimately on this that our future will depend. Education is the base of this progress and considerable attention is being paid now both to the spread of basic education and technical education. Millions of boys and girls are going through school and college courses and hundreds of thousands are being trained in universities and technical institutes. These figures are only a part of India's population and much remains to be done. But, even so, the numbers are large and as they come out of school and college, they bring a new outlook to the business of their lives. Thus, slowly but inevitably, our social patterns are changing. The greatest and perhaps the most revolutionary change is through the enlargement of women's education. It is these girls and young women who are influencing and will progressively change the whole life of the people of India. For the present these changes have taken place more in cities and towns than in the rural areas, but even our villages are being affected by them and, in the course of another few years, basic education will cover the entire school-going age.

Much is said in criticism of present-day education and nearly all of us have joined in criticizing some aspects of it. And yet the fact remains that education is spreading fast and changing the texture of our living.

There is the problem of population. There has been a remarkable increase in population all over the world, and at this pace of increase it is expected that the world population may be anything between 3,500 and 5,000 million by the end of this century. In India, the estimates vary between 600 million and 680 million by the year 2000 A.D. The figure of

600 million is the least that we can expect, provided we can check the pace of growth to some extent.

There are two aspects of this growth of population. The, one with which we are most concerned is that it comes in the way of our economic advance and keeps standards low even though we might be making progress in other directions. The other aspect is that this tremendous world growth of population is eating up the world's resources and industrial materials at a terrific pace. If the entire world functions in this respect as the United States of America is doing today, then probably by the end of the century all the essential materials in the world that are available today will be consumed. That is, of course, unlikely but even if the rate of consumption in other countries is much slower, the available materials cannot last for more than a few hundred years. Thus two consequences flow: one is that we must check the rate of growth of population and the other, we must find other power sources and materials. Possibly the development of Atomic Energy will provide us with other sources of power. We in India are most concerned with checking the growth of population and this has become a matter not only of importance but of urgency.

There are two basic facts which we have to keep in mind. One, the tremendous growth of productive capacity in some nations and consequently wealth and power, as a result of the growth of science and technology. The other is the great disparity between these wealthy and powerful nations and the under-developed nations. This disparity tends to increase and, in fact, has increased considerably in recent years, in spite of the efforts to raise the level of the under-developed nations. If normal economic and other forces are allowed full play, they will make the rich nations richer and more powerful while the others will be struggling painfully to meet their basic needs. Unto those that have, more shall be given. Even within a country, the more developed areas tend to advance more than the other areas.

As a result of this, conflicts and dangers of war between nations arise, and social unrest increases in the under-developed countries. On the one hand, power and wealth are sources of rivalry and conflict; on the other poverty and misery also lead to upsets and conflict. Both result in fear and insecurity. Too much concentration of wealth and power does not bring security and prevents a proper understanding of the forces at play in the world. These disparities, whether between nations or within a nation, therefore, should be lessened.

It is not possible to solve the problems of the nuclear age with the conventional approaches of yesterday. Neither in politics nor in economics can those conventional ideas yield satisfactory results. In international affairs, we see the lack of wisdom in carrying on a cold war with all its accompaniment of fear and hatred, when it is evident that this increases



the dangers to humanity and cannot possibly lead to a solution. Nuclear tests are carried on even when eminent scientists tell us that each such test has very harmful consequences in the present and for future generations. Why then are these out-of-date policies pursued, which have neither logic nor reason behind them, apart from any moral principle? One would expect an immediate and unanimous decision to stop all nuclear tests and to proceed with a progressive reduction of armaments. Fear will prevent any kind of unilateral step but reason should bring about bilateral arrangements which are to the advantage of every country.

This same argument applies to economic theories and approaches, and there is little understanding of the dangers inherent in a world largely consisting of mass poverty with a relatively few affluent countries favourably circumstanced. If it is urgently necessary for the under-developed countries to raise their standards, it is equally necessary, from their own point of view, for the richer countries to speed up this process. These problems of today belong to a new world and cannot be solved by the application of old world methods.

It is a tragedy that colossal sums of money should be spent on armaments to the great detriment of social advance in the world. It is even greater tragedy that the climate of fear and unreason should continue when the way to understanding is open. Understanding does not come through the military approach which can only lead to more fear and tension. I am not blaming any particular country because, to a greater or lesser extent, all countries are in the grip of this climate of fear and cannot wholly disentangle themselves from it. All we can do is to try our utmost to change this climate in our own relations with other countries.

In the early days of capitalism, and, indeed to a large extent even now, the greatest stress was laid on production. That was necessary then. But it became increasingly evident that production by itself does not solve our problems or lead to happiness and contentment. The passion for riches, for acquisition, for more and more wealth tends to corrupt and to create jealousies and conflicts. If the objective aimed at is social balance in a community or in the world at large, production by itself does not achieve it. Indeed, it tends to create greater imbalances. Thus the problem of equitable distribution and the right use of what is produced becomes important. In the final analysis, what is required is the wisdom of how to live and make the most of life for oneself and for the community. Economic policy can no longer be considered as some interpretation of Nature's laws apart from human considerations or moral issues. I have referred to these larger issues repeatedly because we cannot get away from them and they influence even our domestic problems. We are so tied up with inherited ideas that it becomes difficult to consider our problems in their present-day context. Poverty is a degradation, and the obvious reaction is to get rid of it. To talk

of freedom in poverty is almost a contradiction in terms. Worst of all, poverty tends to become self-perpetuating. But too much wealth and affluence, whether in an individual or a society, has also its attendant evils which are becoming evident today. The mere piling up of material riches may lead to an emptiness in the inner life of man.

The socialist approach is certainly an economic one, but it tries to take into consideration these other factors also. There is a danger that socialism, while leading to affluence and even equitable distribution, may still miss some of the significant features of life. It is largely for this reason that stress becomes necessary on the individual. In India our problems today are essentially of economic development and higher standards of living. We have deliberately laid down as our objective a socialist pattern of society, though we have not precisely defined it. I think it is desirable to avoid precise definitions because they tend to become dogmas and slogans which come in the way of clear thinking in a world which is rapidly changing. But too much vagueness also comes in the way of effective action. There have to be, therefore, definite goals and some clear notions as to how to reach them.

I have suggested previously that each country should develop without any imposition from outside. While help and advice should be welcomed, imposition prevents healthy growth and creates conflict. Therefore, every country should be allowed to fashion its own policy provided it does not do injury to other countries as far as possible. We must accept that none of us has the monopoly of truth and also that what may suit us may not be suitable to others living in different conditions. We must also accept that we have to live in this world with many things that we dislike, and the only influence we should exercise is by our own conduct and policies and by friendly co-operation with others. In spite of the great difference between rival ideologies today, I believe that the points of similarity are growing and circumstances are bringing them nearer to each other. If fear was not present and threats and compulsion not used, this process of coming together will be hastened. This means that, broadly speaking, the *status quo* must be accepted, whether in the political or the economic sphere, as between nations. Problems requiring solution must be dealt with through peaceful methods.

There are conflicts within a nation. There is a difference, however, as in a democratic apparatus with adult suffrage, those conflicts can be solved by normal constitutional methods. On the whole, religious conflicts do not take place now. Racial conflicts are limited to a few areas in the world, though the racial problem remains. In India we have had most distressing spectacles of conflicts based on provincialism or linguism. In the main, however, it is the conflict of class interests that poses problems today, and in such cases vested interests are not easy to displace. Yet we have seen in

India powerful vested interests like those of the old Princes and of the big jagirdars, talukdars and zemindars solved by peaceful methods, even though that meant a breakup of a well-established system in favour of a privileged few. While therefore, we must recognize that there is class conflict, there is no reason why we should not deal with it through these peaceful methods. They will only succeed, however, if we have a proper objective in view, clearly understood by the people.

Personally I think that the acquisitive society, which is the base of capitalism, is no longer suited to the present age. It may have been suitable in an earlier period and, undoubtedly, capitalism has great gains to its credit, but the world has outgrown that stage. It is too complex and crowded and we sit almost on each other's threshold. We have to evolve, therefore, a higher order more in keeping with modern trends and conditions and involving not so much competition but much greater co-operation. Ultimately this should lead to a World State. This can only take place in an atmosphere of freedom for each national group to develop according to its likes without interfering with others.

While an acquisitive society, based on the profit motive, appears to be out of place in the new world that is growing up, it does not mean that there should be no incentives. Incentives will always be necessary though they may not be confined to financial benefits. We have to encourage the spirit of adventure, of invention and of taking risks in order to give an edge and substance to our lives. Private enterprise would still have a large field, but even that should function in a different way and not purely in the acquisitive way. In India we have entered, belatedly, into the phase of industrial revolution. We have done so at a time when parts of the world are in the jet and nuclear age. We have thus, in effect, to proceed simultaneously with both these revolutionary changes and this involves a tremendous burden. We have accepted socialism as our goal not only because it seems to us right and beneficial but because there is no other way for the solution of our economic problems. It is sometimes said that rapid progress cannot take place by peaceful and democratic methods and that authoritarian and coercive methods have to be adopted. I do not accept this proposition. Indeed, in India today any attempt to discard democratic methods would lead to disruption and would thus put an end to any immediate prospect of progress. From the long term point of view also I believe in the dignity of the individual and in as large a measure of freedom for him as possible, though in a complex society freedom has to be limited lest it injure others.

The mighty task that we have undertaken demands the fullest co-operation from the masses of our people. That co-operation cannot come unless we put forward an objective which is acceptable to them and which promises them results. The change we seek necessitates burdens on our

people, even those who can least bear them; unless they realize that they are partners in the building up of a society which will bring them benefits, they will not accept these burdens or give their full co-operation. What is called "free enterprise" will never appeal to the masses of our people; it will lead to the use of our resources often for purposes that are not of primary importance. It will mean the exploitation of the profit motive in which the individual may be interested but not society as a whole.

The strongest urge in the world today is that of social justice and equality. The old feudal system was based on the possession of land by a few and the others living on the verge of existence. No one commends that system today. So also many of the systems prevalent today have lost their hold and are not compatible with either people's thinking or scientific advance.

The nature of the task that we have to face demands a carefully planned and scientific approach so as to utilize our available resources in the best possible way and to direct the nation's efforts towards our goal. It is curious that in this age of science there are still some people who believe in the haphazard method of private enterprise with individual profit as the dominant motive.

We are in the middle of our Second Five Year Plan and the Third Plan looms ahead of us. We have arrived at a stage when this Plan must lay down definitely the physical goals to be reached and the manner of achieving them. By the end of the Third Plan we hope, as our President pointed out in his address to Parliament, that "a solid foundation will have been laid for future progress in regard to our basic industries, agricultural production and rural development, thus leading to self-reliant and self-generating economy." We do not expect to solve our problems by the end of the Third Plan and there will be many other Five Year Plans succeeding it, but we do aim at breaking this barrier of poverty so that our under-development may not perpetuate itself. If we succeed in that, as I trust we will, then we shall advance at a more rapid pace and will be less dependent on others.

That will involve a heavy burden, but there is no escape from it if we are serious and determined to advance rapidly towards our objectives.

In recent months, some decisions have been taken in regard to land which have evoked some criticism. We see here the class conflict which is inevitable when any major social change takes place. I am sure that we shall resolve this conflict also peacefully and co-operatively as we have previously resolved other such conflicts.

There is, I am convinced, no other way but that of co-operation for our rural population. Multi-purpose co-operatives are essential for them and these should lead to co-operative farming. I do not think that collective

farming is suited to India in present circumstances and I would not like our farmers to become indistinguished units in a machine. The fact we should remember is that there are too many people in this country and relatively little land. The mere fact of controversy over these issues indicates that progress is being made and we are getting out of the economic ruts of ages.

It is not by some mere theory, however good, that we shall enthuse the masses of our cultivators. The essential approach must be to make them understand and co-operate and to develop self-reliance. Hence the importance of giving powers to the village panchayat and the village co-operative. The argument that they might misuse these powers, though it may have some force, has no real validity. The risk has to be taken, as only thus will the people learn through trial and error.

The Community Development Movement in India started six and a half years ago and now covers over 300,000 villages. This is remarkable advance and I think that it will produce and to some extent is producing revolutionary results in the country. I know well its failings, but its successes are even more obvious. Effective results will depend on the measure of the people's association with it. Officials and trained personnel have importance, but the real part will have to be played by the average farmer. I think that a new spirit is spreading in our countryside as a result of this Community Development Scheme.

Whether in land or in industry, or in the governmental apparatus, institutional changes become necessary from time to time as functions change, and a new set of values will replace those that have governed the old acquisitive society based on the profit motive. The full change-over must take time, for the problem before us is ultimately to change the thinking and activities of hundreds of millions of people, and to do this democratically by their consent. But the pace of change need not be slow and, indeed, circumstances will not allow of too much gradualness.

India today presents a very mixed picture of hope and anguish, of remarkable advances and at the same time of inertia, of a new spirit and also the dead hand of the past and of privilege, of an overall and growing unity and many disruptive tendencies. Withal there is a great vitality and a ferment in people's minds and activities. Perhaps, we who live in the middle of this ever-changing scene, do not always realize the full significance of all that is happening. Often outsiders can make a better appraisal of this situation.

It is a remarkable thing that a country and a people rooted in the remote past, who have shown so much resistance to change in the past, should now be marching forward rapidly and with resolute steps. We are making history in India even though we might not be conscious of it.

What will emerge from the labour and the tumults of the present generation? What will tomorrow's India be like, I cannot say. I can only express my hopes and wishes. Naturally, I want India to advance on the material plane, to fulfil her Five Year Plans, to raise the standards of living of her vast population; I want the narrow conflicts of today in the name of religion or caste, language or province, to cease, and a classless and casteless society to be built up where every individual has full opportunity to grow according to his worth and ability. In particular, I hope that the curse of caste will be ended for there cannot be either democracy or socialism on the basis of caste.

Four great religions have influenced India—two emerging from her own thought, Hinduism and Buddhism, and two coming from abroad but establishing themselves firmly in India, Christianity and Islam. Science today challenges the old concept of religion. But if religion deals not with dogmas and ceremonials, but rather with the higher things of life, there should be no conflict with science or *inter se* between religions. It might be the high privilege of India to help in bringing about this synthesis. That would be in India's ancient tradition inscribed on Asoka's Edicts. Let us remember the message of Asoka:

"The increase of spiritual strength is of many forms.

"But the root is the guarding of one's speech so as to avoid the extolling of one's own religion to the decrying of the religion of another, or speaking lightly of it without occasion or relevance.

"As proper occasions arise, persons of other religions should also be honoured suitably. Acting in this manner, one certainly exalts one's own religionist and also helps persons of other religions. Acting in a contrary manner, one injures one's own religion and also does disservice to the religions of others.

"One who reveres one's own religion and disparages that of another from devotion to one's own religion and to glorify it over all other religions, does injure one's own religion most certainly."

In Asoka's day, religion covered all kinds of faith and duty. Today we do not quarrel over religion so much but over political and economic matters and ideologies. But we might well follow Asoka's advice in dealing with people who differ from us in politics or in economics. There was no place for the cold war in Asoka's mind. There need be none today.

Tomorrow's India will be what we make it by today's labours. I have no doubt that India will progress industrially and otherwise; that she will advance in science and technology; that our people's standards will rise, that education will spread and that health conditions will be better, and that art and culture will enrich people's lives. We have started on this

pilgrimage with strong purpose and good heart, and we shall reach the end of the journey, however long that might be.

But what I am concerned with is not merely our material progress, but the quality and depth of our people. Gaining power through industrial processes, will they lose themselves in the quest of individual wealth and soft living? That would be a tragedy for that would be a negation of what India has stood for in the past and, I think, in the present time also as exemplified by Gandhi. Power is necessary, but wisdom is essential. It is only power with wisdom that is good.

All of us now talk of and demand rights and privileges, but the teaching of the old *dharma* was about duties and obligations. Rights follow duties discharged.

Can we combine the progress of science and technology with this progress of the mind and spirit also? We cannot be untrue to science, because that represents the basic fact of life today. Still less can we be untrue to those essential principles for which India has stood in the past throughout the ages. Let us then pursue our path to industrial progress with all our strength and vigour and, at the same time, remember that material riches without toleration and compassion and wisdom may well turn to dust and ashes. Let us also remember that "Blessed are the Peace-makers".\*



DURING THESE YEARS of thought and activity my mind has been full of India, trying to understand her and to analyse my own reactions towards her. I went back to my childhood days and tried to remember what I felt like then, what vague shape this conception took in my growing mind and how it was moulded by fresh experience. Sometimes it receded into the background, but it was always there, slowly changing, a queer mixture derived from old story and legend and modern fact. It produced a sensation of pride in me as well as that of shame, for I was ashamed of much that I saw around me, of superstitious practices, of outworn ideas and, above all, our subject and poverty-stricken state.

As I grew up and became engaged in activities which promised to lead to India's freedom, I became obsessed with the thought of India. What was this India that possessed me and beckoned to me continually, urging me to action so that we might realize some vague but deeply felt desire of our hearts? The initial urge came to me, I suppose, through pride, both individual

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\*Based on the text of the Maulana Abul Kabm Azad Memorial Lecture in 1959

and national, and the desire, common to all men, to resist another's domination and have freedom to live the life of our choice. It seemed monstrous to me that a great country like India, with a rich and immemorial past, should be bound hand and foot to a faraway island which imposed its will upon her. It was still more monstrous that this forcible union had resulted in poverty an degradation beyond measure. That was reason enough for me and for others to act.

But it was not enough to satisfy the questioning that arose within me. What is this India, apart from her physical and geographical aspects? What did she represent in the past; what gave strength to her then? How did she lose that old strength? And has she lost it completely? Does she represent anything vital now, apart from being the home of a vast number of human beings? How does she fit into the modern world?

This wider international aspect of the problem grew upon me as I realised more and more how isolation was both undesirable and impossible. The future that took shape in my mind was one of intimate co-operation, politically, economically, culturally, between India and the other countries of the world. But before the future came, there was the present, and behind the present lay the long and tangled past, out of which the present had grown. So to the past I looked for understanding.

India was in my blood and there was much in her that instinctively thrilled me. And yet I approached her almost as an alien critic, full of dislike for the present as well as for many of the relics of the past that I saw. To some extent I came to her via the West and looked at her as a friendly westerner might have done. I was eager and anxious to change her outlook and appearance and give her the garb of modernity. And yet doubts rose within me. Did I know India, I who presumed to scrap much of her past heritage? There was a great deal that had to be scrapped, that must be scrapped; but surely India could not have been what she undoubtedly was, and could not have continued a cultured existence for thousands of years, if she had not possessed something very vital and enduring, something that was worthwhile. What was this something?

I stood on a mound of Mohenjo-daro in the Indus Valley in the north-west of India, and all around me lay the houses and streets of this ancient city that is said to have existed over five thousand years ago; and even then it was an old and well-developed civilization. 'The Indus civilization,' writes Professor Childe, 'represents a very perfect adjustment of human life to a specific environment that can only have resulted from years of patient effort. And it has endured; it is already specifically Indian and forms the basis of modern Indian-culture.' Astonishing thought: that any culture or civilization should have this continuity for five or six thousand years or more; and not in a static, unchanging sense, for India was changing



and progressing all the time. She was coming into intimate contact with the Persians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Chinese, the Arabs, the Central Asians, and the peoples of the Mediterranean. But though she influenced them and was influenced by them, her cultural basis was strong enough to endure. What was the secret of this strength? Where did it come from?

I read her history and read also a part of her abundant ancient literature and was powerfully impressed by the vigour of the thought, the clarity of the language and the richness of the mind that lay behind it. I journeyed through India in the company of mighty travellers from China and western and central Asia who came here in the remote past and left records of their travels. I thought of what India had accomplished in eastern Asia, in Angkor, Borobudur and many other places. I wandered over the Himalayas which are closely connected with old myth and legend and which have so much influenced our thought and literature. My love of the mountains and my kinship with Kashmir especially drew me to them, and I saw there not only the life and vigour and beauty of the present but also the memoried loveliness of ages past. The mighty rivers of India that flow from this great mountain barrier into the plains of India attracted me and reminded me of innumerable phases of our history. The Indus of *Sindhu*, from which our country came to be called India and Hindustan, and across which race and tribes and caravans and armies have come for thousands of years; the Brahmaputra, rather cut off from the main current of history but living in old story, forcing its way into India through deep chasms cut in the heart of the north-eastern mountains, and then flowing calmly in a gracious sweep between mountain and wooded plain; the Jamuna, round which cluster so many legends of dance and fun and play; and the Ganga above all the river of India, which has held India's heart captive and has drawn uncounted millions to her banks since the dawn of history. The story of the Ganga, from her source to the sea, from old times to new, is the story of India's civilization and culture, of the rise and fall of empires, of great and proud cities, of the adventure of man and the quest of the mind which has so occupied India's thinkers, of the richness and fulfilment of life as well as its denial and renunciation, of ups and downs, and growth and decay, of life and death.

I visited old mounments and ruins and ancient sculptures and frescoes Ajanta, Ellora, the Elephanta Caves and other places—and I also saw the lovely buildings of a later age in Agra and Delhi where every stone told its story of India's past.

In my own city of Allahabad or in Hardwar I would go to the great bathing festivals, the *Kumbh Mela*, and see hundreds of thousands of people come, as their forbears had come for thousands of years from all over India, to bathe in the Ganga. I would remember descriptions of these festivals written thirteen hundred years ago by Chinese pilgrims and others,

and even then these *melas* were ancient and lost in an unknown antiquity. What was the tremendous faith, I wondered, that had drawn our people for untold generations to this famous river of India?

These journeys and visits of mine, with the background of my reading, gave me an insight into the past. To a somewhat bare intellectual understanding was added an emotional appreciation, and gradually a sense of reality began to creep into my mental picture of India, and the land of my forefathers became peopled with living beings, who laughed and wept, loved and suffered; and among them were men who seemed to know life and understand it, and out of their wisdom they had built a structure which gave India a cultural stability which lasted for thousands of years. Hundreds of vivid pictures of this past filled my mind, and they would stand out as soon as I visited a particular place associated with them. At Sarnath, near Benares, I would almost see the Buddha preaching his first sermon, and some of his recorded words would come like a distant echo to me through two thousand five hundred years. Asoka's pillars of stone with their inscriptions would speak to me in their magnificent language and tell me of a man who, though an emperor, was greater than any king or emperor. At Fatehpur-Sikri, Akbar, forgetful of his empire, was seated holding converse and debate with the learned of all faiths, curious to learn something new and seeking an answer to the eternal problem of man.

Thus slowly the long panorama of India's history unfolded itself before me, with its ups and downs, its triumphs and defeats. There seemed to me something unique about the continuity of a cultural tradition through five thousand years of history, of invasion and upheaval, a tradition which was widespread among the masses and powerfully influenced them. Only China has had such a continuity of tradition and cultural life. And this panorama of the past gradually merged into the unhappy present, when India, for all her past greatness and stability, was a slave country, an appendage of Britain, and all over the world terrible and devastating war was raging and brutalizing humanity. But that vision of five thousand years gave me a new perspective and the burden of the present seemed to grow lighter. The hundred and eighty years of British rule in India were just one of the unhappy interludes in her long story; she would find herself again; already the last page of this chapter was being written. The world also will survive the horror of today and build itself anew on fresh foundations.



In India because of the recognized freedom of the mind, howsoever limited in practice, new ideas are not shut out. They are considered and can be accepted far more than in countries which have a more rigid and dogmatic outlook on life. The essential ideals of Indian culture are broad-

based and can be adapted to almost any environment. The bitter conflict between science and religion which shook up Europe in the nineteenth century would have no reality in India, nor would change based on the applications of science bring any conflict with those ideals. Undoubtedly such changes would stir up, as they are stirring up, the mind of India, but instead of combating them or rejecting them, it would rationalize them from its own ideological point of view and fit them into its mental framework. It is probable that in this process many vital changes may be introduced in the old outlook, but they will not be superimposed from outside and will seem rather to grow naturally from the cultural background of the people. This is more difficult today than it might have been because of the long period of arrested growth and the urgent necessity for big and qualitative changes.

Conflict there will be, however, with much of the superstructure that has grown up round those basic ideals and which exists and stifles us today. That superstructure will inevitably have to go because much of it is bad in itself and is contrary to the spirit of the age. Those who seek to retain it do an ill service to the basic ideals of Indian culture, for they mix up the good and the bad and thus endanger the former. It is no easy matter to separate the two or to draw a hard and fast line between them, and opinions will differ widely. But it is not necessary to draw any such theoretical and logical line. The logic of changing life and the march of events will gradually draw that line for us. Every kind of development—technological or philosophical—necessitates contact with life itself, with social needs, with the living movements of the world. Lack of this contact leads to stagnation and loss of vitality and creativeness. But if we maintain these contacts and are receptive to them, we shall adapt ourselves to the curve of life without losing the essential characteristics which we have valued.

Our approach to knowledge in the past was a synthetic one, but limited to India. That limitation continued and the synthetic approach gave place gradually to a more analytical one. We have now to lay greater stress on the synthetic aspect and make the whole world our field of study. This emphasis on synthesis is indeed necessary for every nation and individual if it is to grow out of the narrow grooves of thought and action in which most people have lived for so long. The development of science and its applications have made this possible for us, and yet the very excess of new knowledge has added to its difficulty. Specialization has led to a narrowing of individual life in a particular groove, and men's labour in industry is often confined to some infinitesimal part of the whole product. Specialization in knowledge and work will have to continue, but it seems more essential than ever that a synthetic view of human life and man's adventure through the ages should be encouraged. This view will have to take into consideration the past and the present, and include in its scope all countries and peoples.

In this way perhaps we might develop, in addition to our own national backgrounds and cultures, an appreciation of others and a capacity to understand and co-operate with the peoples of other countries. Thus also we might succeed to some extent in building up intergrated personalities instead of the lopsided individuals of today. We might become in Plato's words, 'spectators of all time and all being,' drawing sustenance from the rich treasures that humanity has accumulated, adding to them, and applying them in building for the future.

It is a curious and significant fact that, in spite of all modern scientific progress and talk of internationalism, racialism and other separating factors are at least as much in evidence today, if not more so, than at any previous time in history. There is something lacking in all this progress, which can neither produce harmony between nations nor within the spirit of man. Perhaps more synthesis and a little humility towards the wisdom of the past, which after all is the accumulated experience of the human race, would help us to gain a new perspective and greater harmony. That is especially needed by those peoples who live a fevered life in the present only and have almost forgotten the past. But for countries like India a different emphasis is necessary, for we have too much of the past about us and have ignored the present. We have to get rid of that narrowing religious outlook, that obsession with the supernatural and metaphysical speculations, that loosening of the mind's discipline in religious ceremonial and mystical emotionalism, which come in the way of our understanding ourselves and the world. We have to come to grips with the present, this life, this world, this nature which surrounds us in its infinite variety. Some Hindus talk of going back to the Vedas, some Moslems dream of an Islamic theocracy. Idle fancies, for there is no going back to the past; there is no turning back even if this was thought desirable. There is only one-way traffic in Time.

India must therefore lessen her religiosity and turn to science. She must get rid of the exclusiveness in thought and social habit which has become like a prison to her, stunting her spirit and preventing growth. The idea of ceremonial purity has erected barriers against social inter-course and narrowed the sphere of social action. The day-to-day religion of the orthodox Hindu is more concerned with what to eat and what not to eat, who to eat with and from whom to keep away, than with spiritual values. The rules and regulations of the kitchen dominate his social life. The Moslem is fortunately free from these inhibitions but he has his own narrow codes and ceremonials, a routine which he rigorously follows, forgetting the lesson of brotherhood which his religion taught him. His view of life is perhaps even more limited and sterile than the Hindu view, though the average Hindu today is a poor representative of the latter view, for he has lost that traditional freedom of thought and the back-ground that enriches life in many ways.

Caste is the symbol and embodiment of this exclusiveness among the Hindus. It is sometimes said that the basic idea of caste might remain but its subsequent harmful development and ramifications should go; that it should not depend on birth but on merit. This approach is irrelevant and merely confuses the issue. In a historical context a study of the growth of caste has some value, but we cannot obviously go back to the period when caste began; in the social organization of today it has no place left. If merit is the only criterion and opportunity is thrown open to everybody then caste loses all its present-day distinguishing features and, in fact, ends. Caste has in the past not only led to the suppression of certain groups but to a separation of theoretical and scholastic learning from craftsmanship and a divorce of philosophy from actual life and its problems. It was an aristocratic approach based on traditionalism. This outlook has to change completely for it is wholly opposed to modern conditions and the democratic ideal. The functional organization of social groups in India may continue, but even that will undergo a vast change as the nature of modern industry creates new functions and puts an end to many old ones. The tendency today everywhere is towards a functional organization of society, and the concept of abstract rights is giving place to that of functions. This is in harmony with the old Indian.

The spirit of the age is in favour of equality though practice denies it almost everywhere. We have got rid of slavery in the narrow sense of the word, that a man can be the property of another. But a new slavery in some ways worse than the old, has taken its place all over the world. In the name of individual freedom, political and economic systems exploit human beings and treat them as commodities. And again, though an individual cannot be the property of another, a country and a nation can still be the property of another nation, and thus group slavery is tolerated. Racialism also is a distinguishing feature of our times, and we have not only master nations but also master races.

Yet the spirit of the age will triumph. In India, at any rate, we must aim at equality. That does not and cannot mean that everybody is physically or intellectually or spiritually equal or can be made so. But it does mean equal opportunities for all and no political, economic or social barrier in the way of any individual or group. It meant a faith in humanity and a belief that there is no race or group that cannot advance and make good in its own way, given the chance to do so. It means a realization of the fact that the backwardness or degradation of any group is not due to inherent failings in it but principally to lack of opportunities and long suppression by other groups. It should mean an understanding of the modern world wherein real progress and advance, whether national or international, have become very much a joint affair and a backward group pulls back others. Therefore not only must equal opportunities be given to all,

but special opportunities for educational, economic and cultural growth must be given to backward groups so as to enable them to catch up to those who are ahead of them. Any such attempt to open the doors of opportunity to all in India will release enormous energy and ability and transform the country with amazing speed.

If the spirit of the age demands equality, it must necessarily also demand an economic system which fits in with it and encourages it. The present colonial system in India is the very antithesis of it. Absolutism is not only based on inequality but must perpetuate it in every sphere of life. It suppresses the creative and regenerative forces of a nation, bottles up talent and capacity, and discourages the spirit of responsibility. Those who have to suffer under it, lose their sense of dignity and self-reliance. The problems of India, complicated as they seem, are essentially due to an attempt to advance while preserving the political and economic structure more or less intact. Political advance is made subject to the preservation of this structure and existing vested interests. The two are incompatible.

Political change there must be, but economic change is equally necessary. That change will have to be in the direction of a democratically planned collectivism. 'The choice', says R.H. Rawney, 'is not between competition and monopoly, but between monopoly which is irresponsible and private and a monopoly which is responsible and public'. Public monopolies are growing even in capitalist States and they will continue to grow. The conflict between the idea underlying them and private monopoly will continue till the latter is liquidated. A democratic collectivism need not mean an abolition of private property, but it will mean the public ownership of the basic and major industries. It will mean the co-operative or collective control of the land. In India especially it will be necessary to have, in addition to the big industries, co-operatively controlled small and village industries. Such a system of democratic collectivism will need careful and continuous planning and adaptation to the changing needs of the people. The aim should be the expansion of the productive capacity of the nation in every possible way at the same time absorbing all the labour power of the nation in some activity or other and preventing unemployment. As far as possible there should be freedom to choose one's occupation. An equalization of income will not result from all this, but there will be far more equitable sharing and a progressive tendency towards equalization. In any event, the vast differences that exist today will disappear completely, and class distinctions, which are essentially based on differences in income, will begin to fade out.

Such a change would mean an upsetting of the present-day acquisitive society based primarily on the profit motive. The profit motive may still continue to some extent but it will not be the dominating urge, nor will it have the same scope as it has today. It would be absurd to say that the profit motive does not appeal to the average Indian, but it is nevertheless

true that there is no such admiration for it in India as there is in the West. The possessor of money may be envied but he is not particularly respected or admired. Respect and admiration still go to the man or woman who is considered good and wise, and especially to those who sacrifice themselves or what they possess for the public good. The Indian outlook, even of the masses, has never approved of the spirit of acquisitiveness.

Collectivism involves communal undertakings and co-operative effort. This again is fully in harmony with old Indian social conceptions which were all based on the idea of the group. The decay of the group system under British rule, and especially of the self-governing village, has caused deep injury to the Indian masses, even more psychological than economic. Nothing positive came in its place, and they lost their spirit of independence, their sense of responsibility, and their capacity to co-operate together for common purposes. The village, which used to be an organic and vital unit, became progressively a derelict area, just a collection of mud huts and odd individuals. But still the village holds together by some invisible links and old memories revive. It should be easily possible to take advantage of these age-long traditions and to build up communal and co-operative concerns in the land and in small industry. The village can no longer be a self-contained economic unit (though it may often be intimately connected with a collective or co-operative farm), but it can very well be a governmental and electoral unit, each such unit functioning as a self-governing community within the larger political framework, and looking after the essential needs of the village. If it is treated to some extent as an electoral unit, this will simplify provincial and all-India elections considerably by reducing the number of direct electors. The village council, itself chosen by all the adult men and women of the village, could form these electors for the bigger elections. Indirect elections may have some disadvantages but, having regard to the background in India, I feel sure that the village should be treated as a unit. This will give a truer and more responsible representation.

In addition to this territorial representation, there should also be direct representation of the collectives and co-operatives on the land and in industry. Thus the democratic organization of the State will consist of both functional and territorial representatives, and will be based on local autonomy. Some such arrangement will be completely in harmony with India's past as well as with her present requirements. There will be no sense of break (except with the conditions created by British rule) and the mass mind will accept it as a continuation of the past which it still remembers and cherishes.

Such a development in India would be in tune with political and economic internationalism. It would breed no conflicts with other nations and would be a powerful factor for peace in Asia and the world. It would

help in the realization of that One World towards which we are inevitably being driven, even though our passions delude us and our minds fail to understand it. The Indian people, freed from the terrible sense of oppression and frustration, will grow in stature again and lose their narrow nationalism and exclusiveness. Proud of their Indian heritage, they will open their minds and hearts to other peoples and other nations, and become citizens of this wide and fascinating world, marching onwards with others in that ancient quest in which their forefathers were the pioneers.\*



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\* Extracts from *The Discovery of India*